Advent Reflection on the O Antiphons #7

O Emmanuel O Emmanuel [O God with us]

Latin: *O Emmanuel, Rex et legifer noster,*
exspectatio Gentium, et Salvator earum:
veni ad salvandum nos, Domine, Deus noster.

English: *O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver,*
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Isaiah had prophesied:
"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel." *Isaiah 7:14*
(The great Advent title for Jesus the Christ, Emmanuel, means *God is with us*).

This last antiphon in many ways sums up all the others. It opens with the great advent title, Emmanuel, which means God is with us. This is not a hope but a statement of belief. In Advent we wait for the Christ-child to come through the liturgical season but we know he is the god who walks with us. It makes the whole Advent-Christmas cycle a season of thanksgiving again for the gift of God's presence amongst us as our king, our lawgiver and the hope and salvation of all nations. Again we are called into unity by the Christ-Child. This antiphon therefore calls us to look beyond ourselves, our community and our time for we know that the fullness of our salvation comes when Jesus reappears in glory for all. The Isaiah text evokes the young woman with child, Mary, who is our Mother as well as the Mother of Jesus.

Thoughts to ponder as we prepare for Christmas:

As we make our final preparations for Christmas in our homes, how much time have we made to prepare our hearts for Jesus to enter in? Do we recognize the Emmanuel, as the God who is with us, in every moment of our lives? Do we wait for the God of immanence and incarnation, the God of love who makes his presence felt, not through special moments so much as the everyday moments of faith hope and love? How have we allowed ourselves to be used as a God's vessel and accompany others as his presence in their lives? Do we appreciate the presence of God in one another when we receive a welcoming smile, share a moment of happy laughter, take time to rest, or in the contemplation of something beautiful, or when we hear about news of Justice restored and stories of the hand of human kindness being offered?

There is one more O antiphon to consider that is not used at Vespers. See tomorrow's posting!