

Veni, Veni (Kodaly) December: an Advent. Preparation-time for Christmas.  
(MONI.V.13)  
23) Advent means "the Coming", and originally it was the name of the festival we now call "Christmas". The 4-week season of Advent that we now have/came into the church calendar rather late — it was at first simply the few preparation-days before Epiphany (itself a date festival than 25<sup>th</sup> December). But now we have those four weeks, which look not merely to one date later this month, but to the Coming of Christ — at the end of time, and every day and every way He comes into our lives, as well as in the celebration of Christmas. A time of longing, waiting, expectation. Perhaps the best-known, most popular Advent song is the one that my opening music today is based on — Veni, Veni Emmanuel: Come, O Come, God-with-us. The tune of O Come Emmanuel is said to go back about a 1000 years or more, and it's been used in all sorts of arrangements. Music and song is very much part of the tradition of celebrating Christmas and the Coming of Christ — and in these weeks, for Midday Prayer, I'd like to use some of this music, as a help to our reflection and prayer. The custom of carols grew out of embellishments and additions to the music and tones of church services. An old European custom, common especially in Eastern Europe, and also still today very vigorous in our nearby Philippines, was the early morning Dawn Mass in the time just before Christmas, to which villagers flocked, carrying lights and singing popular Advent songs and folk-songs, based on the Mass chants, simple meditations on

the gospel story of Christmas. Here's a sample, from Bohemia — from a Czech Christmas Mass, the 'Sanctus'

SUP.O.120  
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MUSIC

Another famous <sup>Advent</sup> ~~Christmas~~ hymn, in plain song chant, is Ravata Coeli — a lovely plaintive prayer for the coming of Christ. I haven't, unfortunately, been able to find a chant version of it, but here are the words, followed by a concerto-setting by Heinrich Schütz

QQ. MP 61 p1

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22

MUSIC

PRAYERS

QQ. MP 464 p3