



# Advent Vespers Devotional 2020

Saturday, December 5  
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
Stanza 1

O, come, O, come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to you, O Israel!

— Text: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Koln, 1710; tr. John M. Neale, 1818-1866

I have sung this verse hundreds of times in Advent services over the years, but this is the first year that I am struck by the idea of “lonely exile.” It is a feeling that I have felt many times during these last several months of the pandemic—a feeling of being exiled from the way things used to be, from ability to easily physically connect with others. The song reminds us that although we may feel lonely, Emmanuel, “God with us” will appear. During our lonely exile of this Advent season, I must remind myself that God is already with us. I think of the words of the Indian poet Kabir, who writes, “God is the breath inside the breath.” God is not just with us, God is within us and all around us, just like our breath. And this breath is something we all share and gives us all life.

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