



W E E K 1

November 27-December 3

Keep Watch



THEME

Scripture tells us that we are forgiven! It calls us to walk in the light of the Lord (Is 2:1-5), to pray for peace (Ps 122) and to keep watch for Christ's return (Mt 24:36-44), putting aside our deeds of darkness and living in the light (Rom 13:11-14). In this season of Advent, we celebrate the Child who is the Light. We thank God for forgiveness of sins and reaffirm our desire to walk with the Lord.

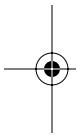
OPENING PRAYER: *First Sunday in Advent*

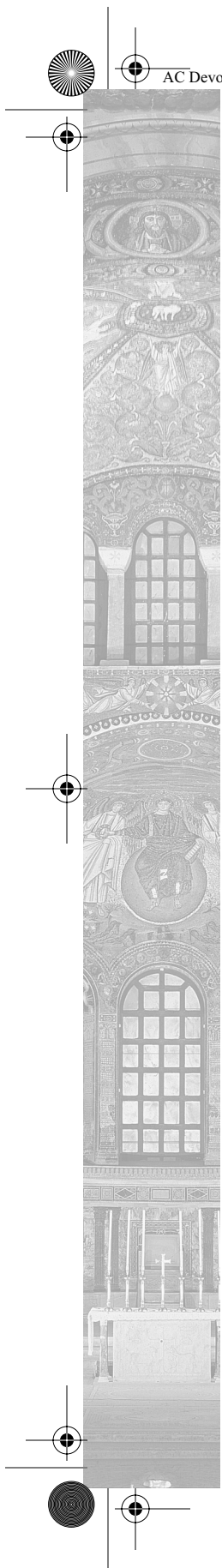
God is peace, the principle of all kinds of communion. Let us extol peace with songs of peaceful praise. It is God-who-is-Peace who brings all things into unity, who is the cause of every agreement, who is the author of all harmony. [Amen.] *Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite*

OLD TESTAMENT READING: *Isaiah 2:1-5*

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

Christ the Mountain. **AUGUSTINE:** The central place they are all coming to is Christ; he is at the center, because he is equally related to all; anything placed in the center is common to all. . . . Approach the mountain, climb up the mountain, and you that climb it, do not go down it. There you will be safe, there you will be protected; Christ is your mountain of refuge. And where is Christ? At the right hand of the





ANCIENT CHRISTIAN DEVOTIONAL ✦

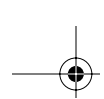
Father, since he has ascended into heaven. *Sermon 62A.3.*

Forgiveness Begins in Jerusalem. BEDE: It was opportune that the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins through confession of Christ's name should have started from Jerusalem. Where the splendor of his teaching and virtues, where the triumph of his passion, where the joy of his resurrection and ascension were accomplished, there the first root of faith in him would be brought forth; [there] the first shoot of the burgeoning church, like that of some kind of great vine, would be planted. . . . It was opportune that the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins, good news to be proclaimed to idolatrous nations and those defiled by various evil deeds, should take its start from Jerusalem, lest any of those defiled, thoroughly terrified by the magnitude of their offenses, should doubt the possibility of obtaining pardon if they performed fruits worthy of repentance, when it was a fact that pardon had been granted to those at Jerusalem who had blasphemed and crucified the Son of God. *Homilies on the Gospels 2.15.*

Peace Through Christ. ANTHANSIUS: Who is the one who has done this, or who is the one who has joined together in peace people who once hated one another, except for the beloved Son of the Father, the Savior of all, even Jesus Christ, who because of his own love suffered all things for our salvation? For from ages past the peace he would initiate was promised. *On The Incarnation 52.1.*

Walk in the Light. JEROME: For all who do evil hate the light and fail to come to the light lest their works be proven. But you, the house of Jacob, the house of my people, come with me and let us walk together in the light of the Lord. Let us accept the gospel of Christ and be illuminated by him who said, "I am the light of the world." *Commentary on Isaiah 1.2.5-6.*

PSALM OF RESPONSE: *Psalm 122*



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NEW TESTAMENT READING: *Romans 13:11-14*

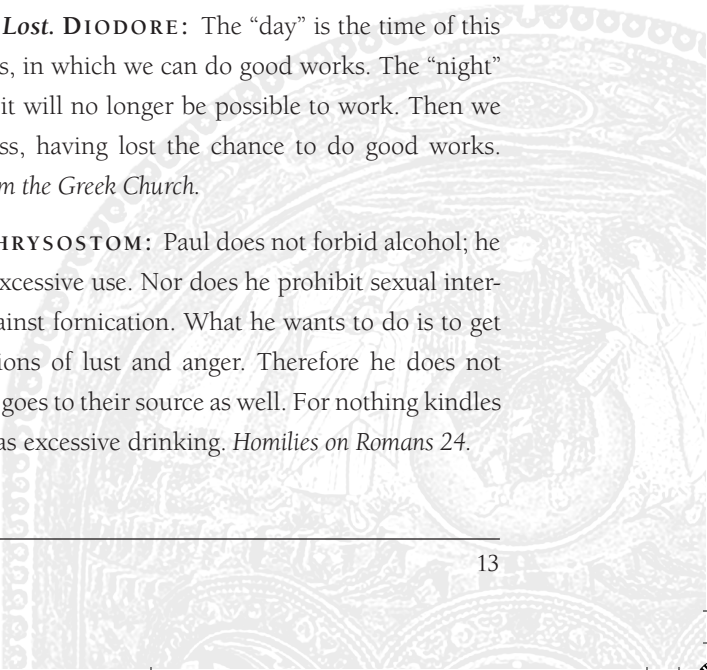
REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

Full Time to Awake. CHRYSOSTOM: Paul is not trying to frighten his hearers but to encourage them, so as to detach them from their love of the things of this world. It was not unlikely that at the beginning of their endeavors they would be more dedicated and slacken off as time went on. But Paul wants them to do the opposite—not to slacken as time goes on but to become even more dedicated. For the nearer the King is, the more they ought to be ready to receive him. *Homilies on Romans 23.*

Cast Off Works of Darkness. ORIGEN: This may be understood in both a universal and in a particular sense. In the first instance, the light is dawning everywhere, and the reign of darkness over the world is rapidly coming to an end. . . . In the second instance, if we have Christ in our hearts he gives us light. Therefore if the reason of knowledge drives away our ignorance and if we turn away from unworthy deeds and do what is right, we are in the light and are walking honestly as if in the day. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*

Opportunities May Be Lost. DIODORE: The “day” is the time of this life which remains to us, in which we can do good works. The “night” is the future, in which it will no longer be possible to work. Then we shall lie in the darkness, having lost the chance to do good works. *Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.*

Restraint of Excess. CHRYSOSTOM: Paul does not forbid alcohol; he is opposed only to its excessive use. Nor does he prohibit sexual intercourse; rather, he is against fornication. What he wants to do is to get rid of the deadly passions of lust and anger. Therefore he does not merely attack them but goes to their source as well. For nothing kindles lust or wrath so much as excessive drinking. *Homilies on Romans 24.*



ANCIENT CHRISTIAN DEVOTIONAL ✦

Put on Christ. DIODORE: This means that we should imitate Christ in what we do and show him to others in the way we behave. *Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church.*

✦ GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 24:36-44*

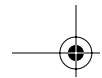
REFLECTIONS FROM THE CHURCH FATHERS

Whether the Son Knows the Day: HILARY OF POITIERS: When Christ taught us that no one knows the day on which the end of time will come, not the angels and not even himself, he removed from us any need to be concerned about its date. O immeasurable mercy of divine goodness! *On Matthew 26:4.*

They Did Not Know Until the Flood Came. ORIGEN: All who listen to the depths of the gospel and live it so completely that none of it remains veiled from them care very little about whether the end of the world will come suddenly and all at once or gradually and little by little. Instead, they bear in mind only that each individual's end or death will arrive on a day and hour unknown to him and that upon each one of us "the day of the Lord will come like a thief." *Commentary on Matthew 56.*

In the Field, at the Mill. CHRYSOSTOM: From both employees and employers some will be taken and some will be left. Among those who are at ease and those who labor, some will be taken, some left. Rank or station will not matter . . . he seems to indicate that the advent will come at night, like a thief, as Luke also indicates. It is amazing how fully he knows all things. *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 77.2.*

Living in Expectation. ANONYMOUS: Why is the date of an individual's death hidden from him? Clearly it is so that he might always do good, since he can expect to die at any moment. The date of Christ's second advent is withheld from the world for the same reason, namely,



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so that every generation might live in the expectation of Christ's return. This is why, when his disciples asked him, "Lord, will you restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?" Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father has established by his authority." *Incomplete Work on Matthew, Homily 51.*

 CLOSING PRAYER

Therefore, we ask that we may know what we love, since we ask nothing other than that you give us yourself. For you are our all: our life, our light, our salvation, our food and our drink, our God. Inspire our hearts, I ask you, Jesus, with that breath of your Spirit. *Columbanus*

