

First Sunday of Advent



THIS IS THE ADVENT WE NEED
Like the wind that whistles in the dead of night,
like the lights that twinkle on the horizon,
like the dew that soaks the earth at dawn,
like the field plowed to receive the seed...

Florentino Ulibarri

Reading 1 Isaiah 2:1-5

This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
In days to come, the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills.
All nations shall stream toward it; many peoples shall come and say:
"Come, let us climb the LORD's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths."
For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples.
They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.
O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me, "We will go up to the house of the LORD."
And now we have set foot within your gates, O Jerusalem. **R.**

Jerusalem, built as a city with compact unity.
To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD. **R.**

According to the decree for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
In it are set up judgment seats, seats for the house of David. **R.**

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May those who love you prosper!
May peace be within your walls, prosperity in your buildings. **R.**

Because of my brothers and friends I will say, "Peace be within you!"
Because of the house of the LORD, our God, I will pray for your good.
R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Reading 2 Romans 13:11-14

Brothers and sisters: You know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep.
For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed;
the night is advanced, the day is at hand.
Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light;
let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and lust, not in rivalry and jealousy.
But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

Gospel Matthew 24:37-44

Jesus said to his disciples:

"As it was in the days of Noah,
so it will be at the coming of the Son
of Man.

In those days before the flood,
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage,
up to the day that Noah entered the
ark.

They did not know until the flood
came and carried them all away.
So will it be also at the coming of the
Son of Man.

Two men will be out in the field;
one will be taken,
and one will be left.

Two women will be grinding
at the mill;

one will be taken, and one will be left.

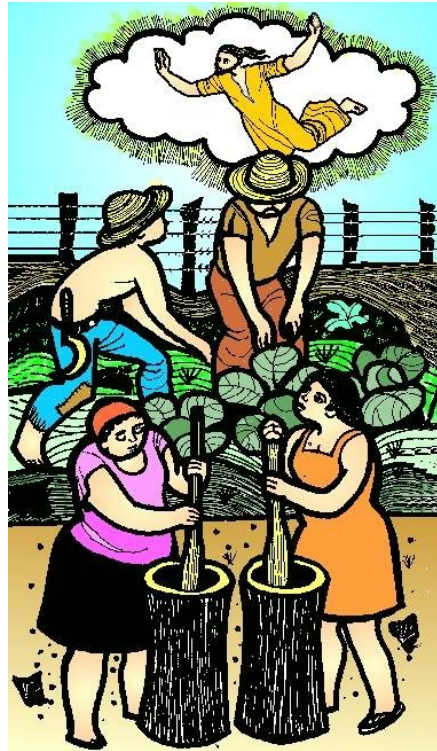
Therefore, stay awake!

For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.

Be sure of this: if the master of the house
had known the hour of night when the thief was coming,
he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into.

So too, you also must be prepared,

for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."



ARE WE STILL AWAKE?

The day will come when the impassioned history of humanity will end, as inevitably ends the life of every one of us. The Gospels put a discourse in Jesus' mouth concerning this end, and they always include an exhortation: «keep vigil», «be alert», «keep awake». The first Christian generations gave great importance to this vigilance. The end of the world wouldn't arrive as soon as some thought. They sensed the danger of forgetting Jesus little by little, and they didn't want him to one day find them «asleep».

Many centuries have passed since then. How are we Christians doing today? Are we still awake, or have we been gradually falling asleep? Do we go about drawn by Jesus, or are we distracted by all kinds of secondary questions? Are we following him, or have we learned to live just like everyone else?

To keep watch is above all to awaken from unconsciousness. We live a «dream» of being Christian when all too often in reality our interests, attitudes, and lifestyle aren't those of Jesus. This «dream» protects us from seeking our personal conversion and that of the Church. If we don't «wake up», we'll keep on deluding ourselves.

To keep watch is to be attentive to reality. To listen to the groaning of those who suffer. To feel God's love for life. To go about more attentive to God's mysterious presence in our midst. Without this sensibility it's not possible to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

We sometimes go about immune to the Gospel's call. We have a heart, but it's gotten hardened; we have ears, but they don't hear what Jesus heard; we have eyes, but we don't see what he saw, nor do we look at people the way he did. It can then happen what Jesus wanted to avoid among his followers: to see them as «blind leading the blind».

If we don't wake up, it could happen to all of us what happened to those in the parable who still at the end of time were asking: «Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and we didn't come to your aid?»

José Antonio Pagola
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