

# FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## LECTIONARY #1

READING I Isaiah 2:1-5

### A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

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!

Isaiah = I-ZAY-uh  
Amoz = AY-muhz  
Judah = JOO-duh

Pause and build energy.

Take your time.

Keep your energy up.  
Zion = ZI-uhn or ZI-ahn

Articulate word endings.

Proclaim with intensity. The stakes are high.

Transition to a tone of rejoicing in the light.  
Smile.

**READING I** Isaiah's opening prophecies concern Judah and Jerusalem. Prophesying in the last half of the eighth century BC, Isaiah knew well of the power of the Assyrian empire, and the threat to Solomon's magnificent temple in Jerusalem. While the intimidating military might of Assyria looms on the present horizon, Isaiah sees an ideal Judah and Jerusalem "in days to come." Isaiah's vision reveals a future time of peace and security founded on the presence of the Lord on the heights of Jerusalem.

In Isaiah's day, mountains and high places were typically considered to be the dwelling places of gods. Jerusalem itself was built on a hill, perhaps for security, although its height is symbolic and theological. Isaiah's vision emphasizes the height of the mountain of the Lord's house, established by God as the highest mountain, raised above the hills. It will be a place to which all nations will stream. The people climbing up to the Lord's own mountain creates a picture of energy and determination, as nations are inspired to come to the Lord's dwelling place. Even those who had

been enemies of Judah will want to be instructed by the Lord, the God of Jacob. God's Word, proclaimed from the height of the temple, will be available to all people.

Isaiah's prophecy suggests that conflicts between nations will continue, but God will be the one who will judge and impose terms. If opposing nations have come with swords, they will beat them into plowshares, and turn their spears into pruning hooks. Ultimately, "walking in the light of the Lord" means God's people, gathered from all nations, will live in accord with God's Word.

For meditation and context:

**TO KEEP IN MIND**

The Responsorial Psalm “has great liturgical and pastoral importance, since it fosters meditation on the Word of God,” the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* says. Pray it as you prepare.

Pause after “Brothers and Sisters:”

More intense. You are giving a command.

Take your time. Proclaim with boldness how we are to act.

Pause and say in a tone of conviction.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

READING II Romans 13:11–14

**A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans**

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**.

**READING II**

In the reading from Romans, Paul uses familiar human experiences and images to delve into the unseen mysteries of faith. Everyone knows the moment of awaking from sleep and of the darkness of night giving way to the brightness of day. Writing to a community in Rome, Paul urges them wake from slumber, and to live in the light of the day, casting off the deeds of darkness.

The imagery has a certain paradox about it, because the death and Resurrection of Jesus has already inaugurated the new age, the dawning of the day of sal-

vation. Believers are therefore already living in the light of day. However, like the early believers in Rome, we are still awaiting Christ’s coming again in glory, his *parousia*. A common way of referring to this paradoxical tension is *the already-and-not-yet of salvation*.

In much of this letter, Paul develops significant theological insights, the core of Christian faith much discussed and debated throughout history. In this part of the letter Paul urges the Christians in Rome to live in light of what they believe. Continuing the image of darkness and light, he says believ-

ers should take off the clothing of darkness and put on the armor of light. Then, properly clothed for the daylight, they are to conduct themselves properly, with dignity and decorum.

The deeds of darkness that Paul lists are similar to others in Paul’s letters (e.g., Galatians 5:19–21). Broadly, the vices can be grouped into acts of drunkenness, sexual impropriety, and community discord. All of these are works of the flesh, whereas Christians are to live according to the spirit. Paul returns to the image of clothing, with