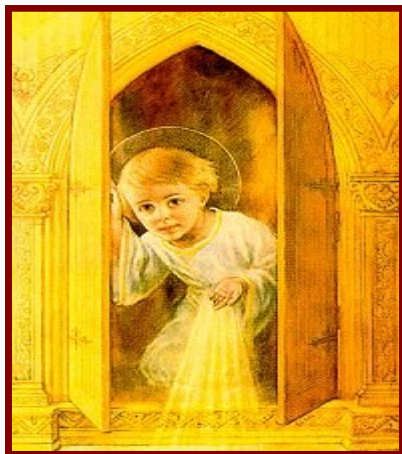


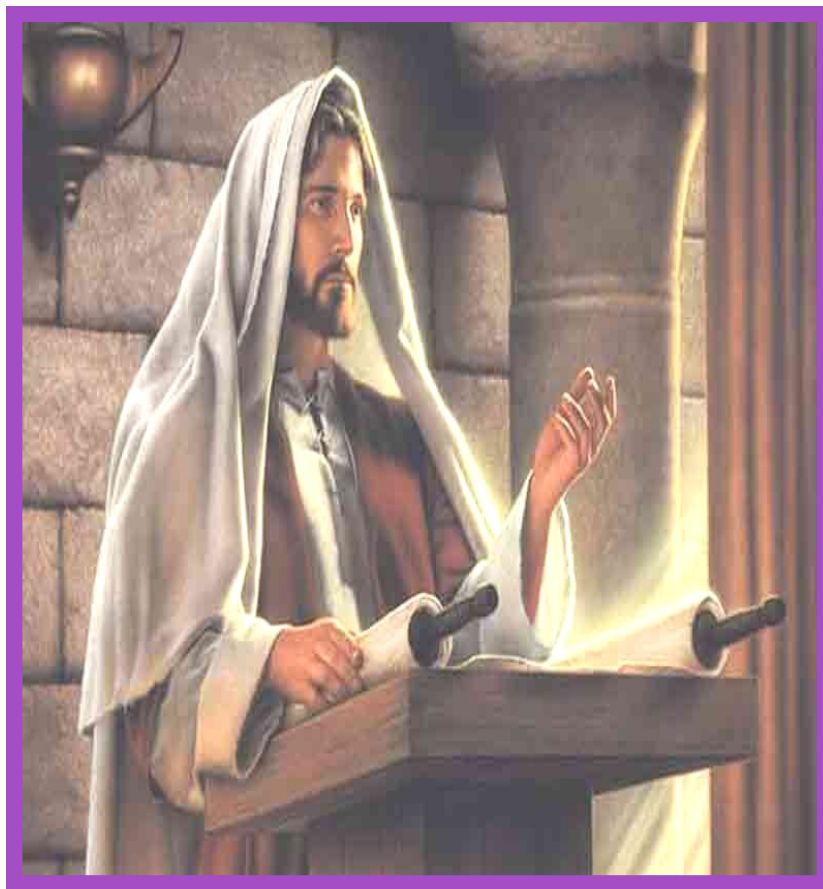
hardships of the way might be refreshed from the abundance of the Food of heaven.

In this way was the duty to pray given to us, the hope of receiving what we ask for, and the manner in which we are to urge our need. Given first by precept, then by this example, He Who promises, gives us also the hope of receiving what He promises. So that obedience may be given to His precept and belief to His promise, Who at sight of human piety grants greater hope in the eternal mercy; providing we ask for what is right and just, so that our prayer may not change into sin.

Paul was unashamed to keep asking for what he desired; so that he might not appear either as doubting God's mercy or as complaining in pride because he had not received what he asked for at his first prayer. *For which thing*, he says, *thrice I besought the Lord* (II Cor. xii. 8), showing us that God when we pray to Him will often not grant our prayer because He judges that what we pray for is not expedient for us, though we believe it a gain. Amen.



**SERMON ON  
WATCH AND PRAY  
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH  
# 154 - 2**



**JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!**

**FIFTH WEEK AFTER EASTER  
THE ROGATION DAYS**

**Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version**

Volume 2 - Pages 1316 - 1317 (1962 edition)

Commentary on the Gospel of John 19: 23-30

by: Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor

In Luke xi. 5-13, we read: *Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight, and shall say to him: Friend, lend me three loaves...*

Here is another command to pray always; and not alone by day, but also by night. For you see how this man who rose at midnight and asked his friend for three loaves, and with steadfast mind continued to ask him, did not fail in his prayer. What are these three loaves but the mystical Bread of heaven? If you love the Lord your God you can earn it, not alone for yourself, but for others also. Who is more your Friend than He Who has given us His Body?

It was of this Friend that David asked for bread in the middle of the night, and received it. He asked for it when he said: *I rose at midnight to give praise to thee* (Ps. cxviii. 62); and through this he gained those loaves (*the psalms*) which he has set before us to eat. He asked, when he said: *Every night I will wash my bed* (Ps. vi. 7). Neither did he fear he might not awaken the Sleeper: Whom he knew was unsleeping. So, keeping in mind these written words, and ceasing not day and night from prayer, let us implore pardon of our sins.

If he who was so holy, and burthened with the cares of a kingdom, praised the Lord seven times a day (Ps. cxviii. 164) and was zealous ever at the morning and the evening sacrifice, what must we do; we who should pray even more:

often... When we are weary from this earthly road, faint from our journey through the world, and at the close of life, we may not be left in need of that Bread of spiritual refreshment that gives strength to the heart of man. The Lord teaches us that we must keep watch, not alone at midnight, but at every moment: for He comes in the evening, in the second watch, in the third, and He is wont to knock. *Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find watching* (Lk. xii. 37).

If you desire that the power of God shall encompass you, and provide for you, you must ever keep watch, for many are the snares that lie in wait for the just, and heavy is the sleep of the body. If the soul begins to sleep, the power of its virtue is lost. Arise then from your sleep, that you may knock upon the door of Christ, which Paul prayed might be opened to him, beseeching, not alone by his own prayers, but also by the prayers of the people, that he might be helped. That a door might be opened to him, to speak the mystery of Christ (Col. iv. 3).

Perhaps this is the door John saw open; for he saw one, and tells us: *After these things I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, as it were, of a trumpet speaking with me, said: Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things that must be done hereafter* (Apoc. v. 1). A door was therefore opened to John and to Paul: that they might receive bread for us that we might eat. He continued to knock at the door, in season and out of season: so that the Gentiles who were weary from the