

**"Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come... May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"**

**Mark 13:33; 36-37**

Dear Deacon Nguyen,

**I've always had great respect for night watchmen. Standing guard while everyone else sleeps seems so noble.**

**Yet God asks each one of us to be on guard—and all the time! But what exactly are we to be watchful for?**

**While marveling at the massive temple that Herod had constructed to appease the Jewish people, the disciples were stunned when Jesus told them that not one stone of that magnificent structure would remain. The destruction of the temple would occur as a direct result of Israel's rebellion against Rome and as an indirect result of their rejection of Him as Messiah.**

**In His great Olivet Discourse—our Lord delivers his prophecies on the Mount of Olives—Jesus is predicting historical events-yet-to-come, all the way up to His second coming. There is much of concern in this 13th chapter of Mark's Gospel: false future Messiahs; wars; earthquakes; famines; persecution...things totally out of our control.**

**In the past, I tended to feel God's presence mainly when things went my way. When there didn't seem to be anything I could do to make a situation better, I would think, "God where are you?" It took me a long time to realize that it was during those most difficult moments that God was carrying me. The suffering churches in Asia and Africa are testaments to feeling God's presence even during Gethsemane moments.**

Asleep at the Wheel of Life

**Oh my dearest Lord,  
help me see the greatest danger  
to my faith is not some enemy,  
or opponent, or misguided idea,  
but rather my own familiarity  
with Your story.**

**Your miraculous birth,  
wonderful life, horrible death  
and glorious resurrection  
no longer fill me with wonder,  
praise and gratitude.**

**I put my trust in earthly things  
instead of in Your promise  
to remain with us even till  
the end of time.**

**And so when things fall apart  
and human institutions fail,  
let me cling to You in faith  
confident You will not let me  
face life's challenges alone.**

**Amen.**

~ Father Joseph R. Veneroso, M.M.

Dinh, many of Jesus' predictions played out—even in the First Century—and continue to play out today. The lesson is that we are not to indulge in mindless work and duty, but rather be attentive to God's presence in our lives for He "is coming amid the clouds" (Revelations 1:7) when we least expect it. We do not know the watch of the night during which our Master will come.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Raymond J. Finch, M.M.

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