

**The Spiritual Vigil**  
**by**  
**H.H. Pope Shenouda III**

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Translated by



# *True coptic orthodoxy*

*"the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints"*

*Jude 1:3*

## **Introduction**

We told you in our previous book about [Spiritual Awakening].

Today, we are talking to you, by the will of the Lord, about [the spiritual vigil] ...

And the spiritual vigil is something other than spiritual vigilance. Spiritual Vigil means that a person was in a slumber or negligence, or in the life of sin, and then woke up, that is, he became aware of himself and his condition.

And this is the beginning of repentance... As for the spiritual vigil, it may come after the spiritual awakening of the one who was a sinner before. It does not require that the person be a sinner before...

This spiritual vigil is the state of a righteous person, who is watching over his own salvation, that is, he is always in a state of spiritual readiness.

It is the state of a person who is spiritually attentive to his own salvation, to all that surrounds him, and to the wars of the enemy... He is also alert to all that circulates thoughts and changes... in his soul of thoughts and changes...

The vigil of the soul is also related to the vigil of the body.

And the book that you have in your hands talks about both of these things. It is the result of three lectures that were delivered on this subject in the great cathedral of the Monastery of Anba Ruwais, on Friday 30/6/1972, and on Friday 7/7/1972, and on Friday 21/7/1972, and a fourth lecture on the same topic/2178/2 was given. In the monastery of St. Anba Bishoy in the Shehet wilderness...

We have decided to publish these lectures for you as a supplement to the topic of spiritual awakening. The spiritual vigil is one of the elements of (the landmarks of the spiritual path), which we are preparing a book about, and we hope that it will be published soon, God willing.

Shenouda III

## **The vigil of the body is a spiritual vigil**

**∴ Were you not able to stay awake with me for one hour (Mt 13:37)**

**. Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.” Matthew  
16:41**

### **Vigil of the body with the soul**

There is vigil for the body, and vigil for the soul. We are most concerned about the vigil of the soul.

The vigil of the soul means that a person is vigilant for the salvation of himself, that is, alert and alert to everything related to this salvation.

As for the vigil of the body that we mean, it is not just a lack of sleep. People in amusement and tampering and sin. Others may stay awake in matters related to the preoccupations of the present world, without God noticing them! Some of them may stay up noisy nights, or stay up late at night.

But the vigil of the body that we mean is vigil in a spiritual way...

It is the vigil of the body in the work of the soul, with God...

This body helps to keep the spirit awake, and shares with it. He who sleeps a lot with the body, his spirit can sleep also, or at least during this much sleep, he is not engaged in spiritual work. And the war of sleep is a war famous in the ascetic and spiritual books...

Therefore, how beautiful is the Lord's words to his disciples in the Garden:

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation (Matthew 26:41), and here the Lord does not ask them to stay awake only, but to stay awake with prayer, or stay awake in prayer. And this is what we mean by our saying "the watch of the body in the work of the spirit" ... or the vigil of the body of the Lord in need in the Garden of Gethsemane to keep his disciples watch with him, but this was beneficial to them "lest they enter into temptation". As if to say to them:

And if you do not pray, you may fall into temptation, so watch and pray." And this fully agrees with the words of the psalm: "In the nights, raise your hands, O saints, and bless the Lord" (Psalm 133).

The Master rebuked his disciples by saying, "Could you not stay awake with me for one hour?!" » (Mark 13:37). Some may ask: Is it sufficient for one hour that the Lord requires of us in staying up late?

We say: If you stay awake with the Lord for even one hour, this hour will awaken your spirit and encourage you to stay awake for another hour.

And maybe even a third and fourth... and staying up late becomes a habit for you.

Just as a minute of sleep may drag you to a full sleep, so an hour of staying up can help you stay up long. However, we notice in the Lord's statement a beautiful word, which is:

"You stayed up with me." And not just staying up late, but staying up late with the Lord.

Watch, then, with the Lord, even for one hour, for it will be a blessing for the whole night... Its usefulness is not limited to a mere hour... So, what is its use then?

The hour of prayer at night, sanctify your bed, and sanctify your subconscious mind...

Therefore, before you sleep, sanctify your bed with prayers, with a conversation of the heart with God. Furnish your bed with hymns, psalms, hymns, melodies and spiritual meditations so that you can sleep on a holy bed, and God will be the last thing that sticks to your mind before sleep, and the last image that you take with you on the journey of sleep and the paths of dreams until you wake up... The journey of sleep in which the subconscious mind leads you and what I stored it in thoughts, feelings, images and news

Thus, the hour of prayer before going to sleep, helps you to sleep. Purify, with the spiritual thoughts you instill in your mind... and thus sanctify your dreams during sleep.

Our holy fathers used to interrupt their nights and sleep by praying...

They do not allow themselves a long period of sleep in which they stop talking with God... Rather, according to the church's arrangement in the Agpeya prayers, sleep is made up of three sleepovers, for each sleep is a prayer, and it includes the whole of the midnight prayer...

So how beautiful it is for a person not to accustom himself to a long sleep. And whenever he wakes up from his sleep, intentionally or unintentionally, he raises his heart to God, even with a short prayer, even with one phrase, or a word of love, or a spiritual thought, or meditation...

But does the night have a special importance in prayer?

Yes, the night is of special importance. That is why it was said in the psalm: "In the nights, raise your hands, O saints, and bless the Lord" ... It was said about the Lord Christ himself that he used to spend the whole night in prayer (Luke 6:12). He used to spend this night on the Mount of Olives and in the Garden of Gethsemane...

And it was said in the great psalm: "In the night I remembered your name, O Lord" (Psalm 115:55). It was also said, "At midnight I rose to thank you for your righteous judgments" (Psalm 111:62).

The Holy Church gives great importance to night prayers

Three prayers are said at midnight, followed by the daily glorification at night as well. And the prayer of sleep, and the prayer of the curtain, at night as well, and also the sunset prayer, which we say in its analysis: "We thank you, our merciful King, because you gave us the day in peace,

and you brought us to the evening thankful.” And even an early prayer in which we say, “My eyes preceded the time of dawn, to recite in all your words...

So why is all this important for the night?

Mar Isaac says: The night is set apart for the work of prayer

Rather, he says most of this: “One prayer that a person prays at night is better than a hundred prayers that he prays during the day” ...!

Why all this interest in the night? Why is it more suitable for work than for the day?

It is the quiet, calm night, far from the hustle and bustle of nature, and from the hustle and bustle of people

It is the night in which a person can be alone with God, away from busyness and delays, and away from human conversations and a lot of talk and noise...

Yes, how often do people disrupt you during the day, with their visits, conversations, thoughts and confusion, until you have no time left to spend with God, in addition to your preoccupation with your work and your responsibilities towards the society in which you live. As for the quiet night, you can meet God...

But this is not an excuse that you offer for your preoccupation with the day and your failure to pray... But what we mean is that the opportunities at night are more, and the situation is calmer, and what you waste during the day in spite of you, you can make up for it at night...

It was said about our father Isaac, the father of fathers:

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening (Genesis 24:63).

Evening, then, has been an appropriate time for contemplation since the days of the first patriarchs. Perhaps this verse is the first verse in the Bible about meditation...

I'm talking to you about staying up tonight. You may have noticed that the past nights were lunar, and nature was still beautiful. On such nights, a person looks at the clear sky and the calm night, as if a voice was screaming inside him and saying (today it is forbidden to sleep) ...

God has created this beautiful nature for you...

In its beauty and in its calm, it reminds us of the words of the Psalm: “The heavens are God, and the heavens proclaim the work of His hands” (Psalm 19:1). David addresses her and says: Praise the Lord, O sun and moon. Praise Him, all you star of light. Praise Him, O heavens of the heavens” (Psalm 148:4,3).

It is strange that the sky and the stars glorify God, and we are silent...

We pray for her in the psalmody, in the melodies of the praise, that they all praise God... But do we at night praise God with her...? Or do we waste the night, and do not benefit from it spiritually, like those who spoiled the night with their noise, frivolity and songs, and made the night noisy as the day, and they may even have it noisier and amusement of the day...

As for you who are blessed, acquire the friendship of the night...

So that you may walk well during the day...

The one who spends the night in prayer, or spends a large part of it in spiritual work, it is difficult for him to make mistakes during the day... because his heart is filled with God throughout the night. The problem is that the enemy meets you during the day and you are not immune and not supported by spiritual strength. Do not take this strength at night, you can fight with it during the day...

The spiritual balance that the heart took at night, benefits it in the wars of the day...

So that you would win the friendship of the night, for this will also help you to win the friendship of the day.

I wish that you would take the night as a means for you, that it would lead you to God...

And at least, if the night is not a spiritual source for you, allow you to make it a field for sin. Rather, “in the nights, raise your hands, O saints, and bless the Lord” (Psalm 133).

I am talking to you now in the summer, when staying up late is easy and pleasant.

Because some are not able to stay up late in the winter, as they protest against the cold, and their need for warmth under the covers, which leads them to sleep...! But what is a person’s excuse if



he does not stay up late in the summer?! ... We say this no, to give permission not to stay up late in the winter...! Rather, it is training to stay up late now where it is easy.

And he who trains to stay up late in the summer, it becomes easier for him in the winter...

He becomes accustomed to staying up late and conversing with God during that time, and he has become absolutely indispensable to him, whether it was in summer or winter, in the warmth or in the cold...

So, staying awake gives activity to the body, and sleep may give it lethargy...

and lethargy of the body with sleep, accompanied by the lethargy of the soul, where there is no prayer or meditation, and there is no enjoyment of being in the presence of God... And the warmth of the body with a lot of sleep may provoke wars against it... Especially if the person is relaxed. On his bed without sleep, for a period of time... This relaxed or sluggish person may let his thoughts wander about any topic, and he may stop at a wrong topic and settle his thought, and thus he makes a mistake in his thought before he sleeps...

And the same situation we say about those who wake up and stay in bed!

Sleeping a lot has two flaws: either the body heat or its lethargy... The heat of the body tires young people. The inactivity of the body returns to laziness...

Both things are spiritually and physically harmful.

Therefore, we advise you to stay awake and be active in body and spirit.

If you can't stay up at night, get up early in the day...

The psalmist says in the psalm: "O God, you are my God, I seek you early, my soul thirsts for you" (Psalm 63:1). And here is the holy early morning, which is for the sake of God, in which you are given to God the first fruits of your day and the first of your time. And God will be the first person you will talk to on this day... You rise quickly from your sleep, and present your heart to God, so that this heart may be filled with love and purity, and so that it may begin well, and luminous senses and luminous thoughts will shine in you, and a holy day may begin. And your day cooperates with your night in building a healthy spiritual life for you, guarding against every mistake. Take it as a rule:

A watchful day helps a holy night,

And holy night helps a watchful day...

The spiritual person stays awake as much as he can in the spiritual work, so that he has an awake heart during his sleep, as the Virgin of the Anthem says: "I am asleep and my heart is awake" (Song 5:2).

And as an encouragement to you to stay awake, I wish you would meditate on the vigil of the saints...

### **the vigil of the saints**

Here I remember that in one of the lectures years ago, I asked you, as a spiritual training, to meditate on the topic (Nights of the Saints), and gather from the lives of the saints all the information related to this subject...

Naturally, the saints used to spend their nights in spiritual work: in prayer, hymns, meditation, and sometimes in spiritual reading or spiritual recitations.....

Saint Arsenius, he often spent the night standing and praying...

Raising his hands towards the sky, he was standing facing east at sunset, and the sun was behind him. And he remains standing and praying until the sun rises in front of him. He was sleeping...

And Saint Anba Bishoy, had his own way of staying up late...

Perhaps you have read in the Garden the story of that careful monk who was famous for his tears in prayer. He had a friend who tended an orchard and asked him to help him in watering the orchard. This careful monk answered him by saying, "Go, you water by day, and I water by night," meaning his tears with which he quenches his thirsty soul to God...

We are running out of time to talk about all the stories of the saints...

Vigil is an essential work in the lives of the fathers, and a spiritual element that they used to dispense with... You can read about it in the books of Palladius, Jerome, Cassian, Rufinus, The Garden of the Monks, and the scattered biographies of the saints of the prairie...

And “the vigil of the night in prayer” is a phrase that appears in the ritual of ordination of monks, as it was said about them in one of the praises of the month of Kiahk, “I stay awake day and night, crying out and saying, Holy.”

... that vigilance is not a virtue for monks alone, but vigilance is a virtue for servants as well and for all people. Saint Paul the Apostle talks about his service and the service of his colleagues as well, saying: “...in everything we show ourselves as God’s servants in many things... in nights and in fasting. ...” (2 Corinthians 6:5-4).

Thus, you show us the way he treats the body: he controls it with regard to food, and he offers it fasting. And he controls him in terms of sleep, so he gives him sleepovers... and thus shows himself as a servant (and not as a monk...) ...

And just as Paul was the apostle, David was also the king...

He is also a servant of the Lord, in another field. This we hear him saying, “I will not enter the dwelling of my house, nor go up on my bed, nor give sleep to my eyes, nor drowsiness to my eyelids, nor rest to my temples, until I find a place for the Lord...” (Psalm 131).

And he and David's psalms are filled with his talk about his staying up at night in prayer...

Those who are accustomed to staying awake with God, when they sleep, their hearts will also be with Him...

These, if they sleep, dream of the beloved God who fills their hearts...

And Mar Isaac says about the sleep of these people, that the fantasies of his dreams are purer and more sacred than the awakening of others who do not do a spiritual act like them...

There is no doubt that the one who is preoccupied with spiritual work during the day fills his mind with spiritual thoughts, and fills his heart with sacred feelings: if he sleeps, beautiful spiritual images come out of his subconscious in his sleep, and he may also pray while asleep, or he has deep spiritual meditations in his dreams...

Shall we address from this topic to the topic (dreams of saints) ...

It's dreams in sleep. But sleep is more sacred than the wakefulness of many. Are we talking about the ladder that our father Jacob saw connecting the heavens and the earth, and the holy angels ascending and descending on it (Genesis 28) ... Or are we talking about the dreams of Joseph the Righteous, or the dreams of Daniel the Prophet, and the dreams of the saints of the prairie, and the dreams of the service saints, and the holy visions in the lives of these and those?

What the Apostle Paul saw, what John the Beloved saw, what Anthony the Great saw, and what Hermas saw (in his book: The Shepherd).

The subject of (Dreams and Visions of Saints) is a long topic that may need a special book. Today, I apologize for going into its details, and I go back to our conversation about spiritual vigils... It would suffice to say that there is sleep for some that are more sacred than awakening for others. I also say:

If you have a holy spiritual vigil, you will also have a holy spiritual sleep...

And if you raise your eyes to God in your wakefulness, then you can apply them to see Him as well. As one of the spiritual writers said:

I closed my eyes to see you...

What is your relationship then to the night, the vigil of the night, and the god of the night?

The night in which you have no excuse... and you cannot say about it as you say in your prayer about the day: "The heavy and hot day of the day, I could not bear it due to the weakness of my humanity."

And behold, the night is before you, with no heaviness or heat in it...

We go back and repeat the phrase of Saint Isaac: The night is set apart for the work of prayer. And St. Paul the Apostle says, "Continue in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2) ... Here we recall the phrase that the captain of the ship said rebuking the prophet Jonah:

"You are asleep?! Arise, and cry out to your God" (John 1:6).

Arise at night, according to the call of the Church, which says, "Rise, O children of light, let us praise the Lord of Powers, that He may bless us with the salvation of our souls." Then we say to

the Lord, “When we stand before you physically, Lord give us vigilance, so that we may understand how we can stand before you at the time of prayer” (Midnight Prayer) ...

Also, get up early from sleep, and say with David the Prophet in the Psalm: “My eyes have preceded the time of dawn, that I may recite all your sayings” (Psalm 119). Really, where do we escape from this verse?

Watch, my brethren, and pray, according to the commandment of the Lord for us...

Do not make your eyes heavy with sleep, nor your bodies burdened with sleep.

Practice staying up late until it becomes a habit. Let your bodies be active, and your spirits also. Watch with the Lord, because He rebukes us by saying, “Could you not stay awake with me for one hour?!” » ...and know that staying awake with the Lord has spiritual signs.

### **The Vigil with the Lord**

This vigil undoubtedly indicates a person’s love for God and the heart’s love for prayer..

The love of God is what drives a person to subjugate the body, and to control his desire for comfort and his need for comfort, in order to continue in God without sleep preventing him from that...

If a person stays awake in prayer, this indicates that his love for God is more than in the sense that he loves his comfort more...or that he sees his comfort speaking as his love for himself, meaning that it is more than his love for his comfort...or that he sees his true comfort in God and in talking to him...

Staying awake indicates that the soul is in control, not the body.

And that the body started to have spiritual goals. Hence, it is possible for him to participate with the soul in one work, which is the hadith of God.

And staying up late indicates that the day's preoccupations did not disrupt the soul...

The mind, which is dominated by the preoccupations of the day, and what is in it of events, news and emotions, cannot devote himself to God, rather the thoughts of the day remain in his mind in which his mind wanders.

As for the one who stays up in prayer, it indicates that he put the day's preoccupations behind his back, in his heart alone. As for the world and its interests, everyone died in his heart. This reminds us of the words of St. John al-Tabasi when he was asked: What is pure without recklessness? He replied:

This prayer is death to the world.

The scientist died and all his interests came from the heart, so the thought became prayer without recklessness.

Indeed, the vigil of the body in prayer is a great virtue. But the vigil of the soul is a greater virtue.

### **Church Rite in regards to Vigil**

The Holy Church encourages her children to stay awake at night, and sings Psalm 133 to them: "In the nights, raise your hands, O saints, and bless the Lord..."

. It offers them a night-time program that includes:

- 1- Introduction to each prayer, with a special introduction
- 2 - The midnight prayer, consisting of three nights rest
- 3- The midnight prayer (Psalmody).

And of course, we begin with the Lord's Prayer, as the Lord taught His disciples

Then the prayer of thanksgiving, in accordance with the saying of David the Prophet, "At midnight I rose to thank you for your righteous judgments" (Psalm 119).

Then the fifty psalm, asking the Lord for mercy and forgiveness of our sins.

The Church awakens her children who are sleeping in the body, to share in one prayer and one hymn that they present to God... o God... So, it's beautiful chant sings in their ears: "Rise, O sons of light, let us praise the Lord of Powers..."

Give us, Lord, vigil, so that we may understand how to stand before You at the time of prayer...

Teach us also that vigilance and vigilance are also a gift from God, and the matter is not just human diligence, but rather it is in seeking His help, she concludes the introduction to the prayer by saying, "Rise, O Lord God, and may all your enemies and the enemies of the Lord be scattered, they are the devils who resist us...and pray to us."

There is a beautiful note about the midnight prayer, which is:

1 The Church prays that God will accept this prayer

So, in more than one place, recite the words of the psalmist in the great psalm: "Let my means come before you, O Lord..."

"Let my request come to you."

This is because not every prayer is accepted before God, rather we have to pray for God's acceptance of our prayers, and for them to enter His throne...

This great psalm (Psalm 119), which we pray at midnight, is a psalm full of love, emotions and depth, in which the soul pours out its feelings before God... This psalm needs a special book to contemplate what it contains the soul's longing for God, and its love for Him.....

2- That is, the chapel stands first, to present its love to the Lord.

This is the first goal of staying up late, as God's heart says, through the words of this amazing psalm:

“With all my heart I have asked for you...” “My luck is you, O Lord... I have satisfied your face with all my heart” “Beloved is your name, O Lord, for it is all day long I recite” “The law of your mouth is better for me than thousands of golds and silver” “Your words are sweet, better in my ring.” Honey and witness in my mouth “I am yours, so save me” “My soul is always in your hands, and your law I have not forgotten” “I rejoice at your words, as one who finds many spoils” ...

3 Next to love, there is a cry to the Lord...

Whether in the great psalm, or the rest of the psalms of the whole night, it also includes the psalms of sunset and sleep... The heart, feeling its weakness, turns to God, the source of all strength, crying out to Him, asking for His intervention and help...

As he says in the first psalm of the sleep prayer: “Out of the depths I cried to you, O Lord, hear my voice (Psalm 130). And as he also says in (Psalm 141): “With my voice, I cried to the Lord, with my voice I prayed to the Lord. I pour out my supplications before him, I spread my distress to him...”

In the sunset prayer, the worshiper says: “To you, O Lord, I cried in my grief, and you answered me” (Psalm 120).

4 In the midnight prayer, there are consolations with God's help...

We say in it, “Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, it will not pass away forever” (Psalm 125). Also, “We escaped, like a sparrow, from the trap of the hunters. The snare has been broken, and we have escaped” (Psalm 124), and also “The Lord has magnified what was done with us, so we were rejoiced” (Psalm 126), and also “Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem... for he strengthened the locks of your gates... Who made your borders in peace” (Psalm 147). It is time for us to talk about the rest of the psalms. Let's move on to another point:

God's comforting aid as it appears in the pieces of Psalmody... The Psalmody reminds us of God's marvelous works with humans. The first obsession focuses on the splitting of the Red Sea, deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh, and the power of God that also saved from Sihon, the king of matters between Og, the king of Bashan, and the rest of the enemies... And the third obsession, in which we sing about the salvation of the three young men from the furnace of fire, and how they praised the Lord while they were in the furnace. All are events that comfort everyone who is in distress or fatigue...

5 - That is why the night prayers are filled with glorification, whether the glorification mentioned in the Psalms, or the glorification contained in the Psalmody. He gives thanks to the Lord, and



meditates on his many wonders, because his mercy is forever, as in the second obsession. And glorification of God, whom all nature praises.

Including celestial beings or all terrestrial natures, even animals, birds, mountains, rivers...

It is a symphony of praise shared by all the elements of nature.

In it, the prayer-place feels at midnight, that man is not the only one who praises God, but rather the whole of creation... and that as a representative of nature he calls all of them to praise the Lord... as it appears in the third and fourth mania with glorifying God with all instruments of music and rapture... How amazing is this, and how deep is its effect on the heart.

Added to this are the psalms: "Praise the Lord, O my soul," (Psalm 145), and "Praise the Lord, all you nations" (Psalm 116). Rather, the entire prayer is called a praise in the Agpeya, so it is said "the Praise of sunset of the blessed day" and "the rosary of sleep" ...

6- Confession of sin and reproaching the soul:

Not only in the fiftieth psalm, but also in many of the psalms... and the fragments of the Agpeya... There are many phrases in which the soul rebukes before God:

"I have spent my life in pleasures and lusts, and the day has passed me by and death" negligent?!  
"Oh God, forgive me, for I am a sinner." "Lord, give me many springs of tears, as you were given in the old days to the sinful woman" ... and the likes of these prayers are many...

7- The night prayer reminds man of death, judgment, and preparation forever...

"Behold, I am about to stand before the just Judge..." "Behold, the circumcision comes at midnight..." The phrase "Now, O Lord, you release your servant in peace" is repeated in the gospel of the sleep prayer, and at the end of the midnight prayer... with the awakening of the soul: "Understand, O my soul, this terrible day and wake up" "Lord, your judgment is terrifying... The journeys are opened, and deeds are revealed... »

Man needs this souvenir, lest he be swept away by the current...

How beautiful is it that the church places prayers in which a person remembers the day of death so that life does not deceive him? And he remembers the Day of Judgment so that he will hold himself accountable before God will judge him. And he remembers the coming of Christ again, so that he feels the annihilation of this world... and concludes by saying to the Lord:

“Yes, O Lord, make it easy for us to be in that hour, without fear, nor confusion, nor falling into judgment.”

8 - In remembrance of our sins, the Church directs us to intercede with the saints...

Intercession with the Virgin is present in all Agpeya prayers...

But in the midnight rosary, there is the synod prayer, in which we address the Virgin and the holy angels who have passed on as apostles, prophets, martyrs, fathers, and shepherds... We say to each one of them: “Ask the Lord on our behalf, that He may grant us the forgiveness of our sins.”

9-The night prayers include other meanings...

As a complete dependence on God, and asking Him to intervene in our lives...

Like humiliation and self-condemnation in front of him.

10 - Melody and music are included in the church rite...

Music and melody help awaken the body

It also nourishes feelings with deep spiritual effects

In it, we see the worshiper worshiping God with joy, and glorifying Him with musical instruments as mentioned in Psalm 150, which we recite in the fourth obsession.

## **the Vigil of the soul**

+ Desert, do not swarm, because Satan understood you as a lion, around a place where he would afflict him.” (1 Peter 5:8).

+ One side to those who walk, who, when an arrow disgraces them, are watching over them.”  
Luke 12:37

### **The importance of the vigil of the soul**

The watchfulness of the spirit is the watchfulness of man for the salvation of his soul. There is no doubt that this is a serious matter, which every heart should place in the depths of its deepest concern. Therefore, we lay before us an important rule, which is:

The vigil of the soul is undoubtedly more important than the vigil of the body...

This is to the extent that the sleep of the soul is much more dangerous than the sleep of the body.

The reasons are clear:

1 - The body may sleep for the most part for eight or nine hours, then wakes up on its own, without needing any effort from anyone to wake it up...

As for the soul, it may sleep for years... and it may remain asleep until an hour that does not know itself, or it does not know its state, and it does not feel... death, as it slips from hole to hole, from the labyrinth to labyrinth, and from darkness to darkness...

2 - It is possible for a person to sleep and not make mistakes... and everyone sleeps, even the saints also sleep with the body and do not sin...

As for the soul's sleep, it is a sin, because this means that it is unaware and neglectful of its salvation...

3 - The sleep of the body may be a natural sleep, or something necessary.

As for the soul's sleep, it is an unnatural thing. The soul is supposed to be on the watch with the Lord. Therefore, staying up late is the necessary thing for her, not sleeping...

4- The body may sleep, and the heart is awake...

As for the sleep of the soul, it is a comprehensive sleep in which the heart, conscience and the mind share, whether the body is awake or not... The heart is asleep in terms of its feelings towards God, and the conscience is asleep and does not perform its work in reprimanding or directing, and the mind is asleep and does not think about its destiny or in the results of the sleep of the soul.

For all this, the book recommended the vigil of the soul. The Lord blessed the watchers and said, "Blessed are those servants who, when their master comes, will find them watching" (Luke 12:37). What is the word "watchers" here? It means that each of them is watching over his own salvation and eternity, paying attention to his spirituality, with great care, "taking care of

himself”, that is, being concerned about his own salvation and eternity, paying attention to his spirituality, with great care, “taking care of himself”, that is, being concerned about himself and his salvation and eternity, paying attention to his spirituality, with great care, “taking care of himself”, that is, being concerned about himself and its destiny... Watching over every minute of his time, how he spends it well. At the same time when the Lord blesses the watchers, we see him warning against staying awake by saying “...so that he does not come suddenly and find how many are asleep.” (Mark 13:36).

That is, lest death overtakes you while you are negligent, or in a state of indifference... The waters sweep you into the fleeting sea of the world, and you are not ready to meet the Lord, nor for that hour, and this preparation does not cross your mind. And so, your life is wasted...! That is why I still remember that righteous man who used to stand in the monastery to pray, and says with all his heart: “Do not take me, O Lord, in an hour of heedlessness.”

It is clear, then, that the vigil of the spirit, which the Lord commands us, is a vigil for life, perpetual vigil...

It is the vigil of all life, in preparation for the hour of death.

In this, the Lord says: “Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house will come: evening, or midnight, or cock crowing, or morning.” lest he comes suddenly and finds you asleep” (Mark 13:34-36).

And he also says:

\* Watch and pray, for you do not know when the time will come (Mark 13:33).

Therefore, preparation for eternity is the first reason for spiritual vigilance. As for the second reason that necessitates the soul’s vigilance, it is that the devil is also vigilant, roaming like a roaring lion, so we must prepare for him by staying awake. In this regard, Saint Peter the Apostle said:

\* “Awake and watch, for your adversary the devil is wandering about seeking someone to devour him” (1 Peter 5:8).

After this, the apostle says: “Resist him firmly in the faith.” ... How can a person who is concerned with saving himself, resist a strong enemy like this, who roams like a lion, unless he is on the alert. If he does not stay awake, the enemy will swallow him up.

For this reason, the Lord presents the third reason for staying awake when He says:

\* “Watch and pray that you do not enter into temptation” (Matthew 26:41).

We ask the Lord, in the Lord's Prayer, not to enter us into temptation, but to deliver us from evil. And the Lord, by His grace, will protect us from temptations, but at the same time, He directs us to our role in this field. He says: “Wake up and pray, lest you enter into temptation”... Staying awake, then, is a divine command, explaining to us how to escape from temptations: He helps, and we stay awake. Thus, we enter into fellowship with the Holy Spirit at work...

This is because many experiences happen to us because of our negligence...

Because of our laxity, negligence, and not staying up to date on our salvation...

Here, I like a phrase mentioned in the Holy Bible about the shepherds who lived through the birth of the Lord Christ, and the angel announced to them the birth of the Lord... These were said about them that they were:

Shepherds who are omnivores keep watch over their flock by night (Luke 2:8)

They were watching over their sheep, “guarding the watch of the night,” lest a beast, if they slept, prey on them, and prey on their spoils, or snatch them in the dark, without them even realizing it.

Are you, dear reader, like these conscious people, living your spiritual life, watching over the watch of the night, lest the enemy, the ruler of darkness, seizes the opportunity of your sleep and hijacks your spirituality that is under your watch, and which you should watch over to guard it... Or your flock or your disciples are kidnapped from you? You were a servant and responsible for others, and you were supposed to watch over them, especially if the enemy was roaming like a roaring lion...

Staying awake is also one of the attributes of God as a shepherd... This is what it was said about him “he neither sleeps nor sleeps” (Psalm 120). If we were created in the image of God, and in his likeness and likeness (Genesis 1:26), then let us have this quality of watchfulness - even if by a measure - to the extent that our nature tolerates...es...

God watches over us. And we need to stay up with him for ourselves. See what the Book of Songs says about Solomon's bed, which here symbolizes the throne of God... It says, "Sixty

mighty men around it..." that is, men of war who are able to fight, who entered the wars of the Lord as mighty men... And what about these? The Divine Revelation says: "They are all wielders of swords and are educated in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh, from the terror of the night" (Song 3:7,8). The phrase with his sword on his thigh, means a state of readiness, being ready for any spiritual war, trying to distance the heart from God.

As long as there is a night, and a terrifying night with a terror in it, in which the enemy of the good, whom the Lord called the power of darkness (Luke 22:53), roams about, then you must be on the lookout, "watching the watch of the night" while holding your sword, and ready for war with the enemy, who may come hidden. And in the dark, to put before you a sin or temptation, and try to bring you down...

The heedless and negligent, and those who live in indolence and indifference, these are not fit for spiritual wars against the inflamed forces of evil. He only repairs every mighty man with strength, watchful, who guards the guards of the night, and his sword is on his thigh from the terrors of the night...

What is required of you, in your vigil, is to guard the watch of the night, and what is also required of you is to be educated about war here. I remember the words of David the Prophet: Blessed be the Lord, my rock:

"He who teaches my hands for battle, and my fingers for war" (Psalm 144:1).

That is, blessed is the Lord who teaches me the secrets of spiritual warfare, how to enter into spiritual jihad, how to fight demons, and how to understand their methods, plans, and tricks. How can I be constantly vigilant and alert to every war that the devil raises...

In fact, the phrase vigil, also means preparing...

It means that a person should be prepared for every spiritual war, alert to every sin that tries to creep into his heart, or try to control his will, and pays full attention to all the thoughts of Satan... And as St. Paul, or try to control his will, and pays full attention to all the thoughts of Satan... And as St. Paul the Apostle said in this vigil against Satan: "Because we are not ignorant of his thoughts. » (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Vigil means that a person is prepared for spiritual wars. It also means that he is also ready for eternity...

In this preparation, the Lord gave us the example of wise virgins...

They were waiting for the bridegroom, and the ignorant ones were likewise, but the wise distinguished themselves over the ignorant ones that they were ready for this meeting. One of the



indications of this willingness is that they had oil for their lamps in their vessels. That is why the book says a very important phrase about the coming of the bridegroom... It says in Matthew 10:25

And those who were ready went with him to the wedding, and the door was closed.” And preparation is staying up late. Therefore, the Lord concluded this parable by saying,

“Watch therefore, for you do not know the day or the hour in which the Son of Man will come” (Matthew 25:13). And he says in the Gospel of our teacher Luke, “You, therefore, be ready...” (Luke 12:40), and preparation means vigil, the perpetual spiritual vigil...

Here we ask: What is the difference between the holiest saint and a sinner?

The difference is that the saint is awake and ready. The sinner is oblivious and negligent.

Satan fights the two together, he fights the saint just as he fights the sinner, and perhaps more, and both are subject to fall, and they have human weakness, and none of them is infallible...

But the difference, is that the devil then comes to fight the saint, finds him ready for him, watching him, with his sword on his thigh, and he is educated in war...

As for the sinner, Satan will find him unaware of his own salvation, with no weapon in his hand, and no ability to fight, so his fall becomes easy. ...

Are you ready? Are you in a continuous spiritual vigil, in which you are not taken carelessly? If you are not awake, start staying up late.

But what are the manifestations of this vigil and this readiness? The Lord God says about that (Luke 12:35).

“Let your loins be swirled, and your lamps kindled...”

“Fasten waist” means preparation: preparation for work or travel, and both are necessary for the spiritual vigil. Perhaps the first time we heard a divine command to this, it was on the day of the Passover, and the people were ready to leave the land of slavery, and cross to where they are under the leadership of the Lord Himself... The Lord commanded them that night that “your loins should be tight” (Exodus 12:11). That is, to be ready to travel, to cross, and get out of the bondage of sin.

And the person who feels his alienation in this present world, and that he is traveling from it to the city of God, his loins are constantly girded and tightened, whether in his spiritual work or his preparation for travel....

And the monk who represents alienation from the world and preparation for eternity, always wears a belt on his loins, like John the Baptist (Matthew 4:3).

## **How to prepare:**

### **1 - First of all, it is a readiness to repent:**

That is why we say in the night prayer: “Repent, my soul, as long as you are still on the earth... Rise from the slumber of laziness, and pray to the Savior with repentance, saying: O God, have mercy on me and save me.” That I will be wrought by your two feet, which freed me from the path of misguidance... and bought me a pure life with repentance.” “Enjoy my poor soul with humility, before the end comes and save me.”

Night prayer, as established by the Church, is an urge to repent.

A person prays it, so he humbles himself before God, and knows the importance of spiritual vigil for his salvation, by being prepared, with repentance, confession, and tears, and constantly doing that... even if he is negligent and awakens to himself. And by keeping his body awake in prayer, he acquires the vigil of the soul...

What about how to prepare? We acquire it by repentance and also:

### **2- Through jihad and righteous deeds:**

The watchful man strives with all his might to resist all the forces of evil, as the apostle Peter said: “Awake and watch, for your enemy the devil roams like a roaring lion... So, resist him, steadfast in the faith” (1 Peter 5:8,9).

This resistance to Satan represents the spiritual struggle, which is an essential element of the spiritual vigil. And this jihad is not negative, but rather has its positive effect with good deeds...

Therefore, at the beginning of the night prayer, we remind ourselves of the beginning of the great psalm: "Blessed are they who are without a blemish on the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who search for his testimonies and seek him with all their hearts" So that we may realize in our vigil that we must be without blemish in the way of the Lord, and take care of His law and commandments... Then we shall not be ashamed.

### **3-Thus comes the preparation as well, by adhering to the commandments of the Lord.**

The worshiper says to the Lord in the night prayer: "If the commandment had not been my recitation, then I would have perished in my affliction" (Psalm 119). Yes, God's commandment teaches me to stay vigil. "Your words are a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path." "I have hidden your words in my heart, so that I may not sin against You."

Just as the girdled waist means preparation for work and travel... So also, the kindled lamps mean permanent spiritual illumination...

The person who is watchful for his salvation is a person who has this enlightenment, who sees what is beneficial for his salvation and what is harmful. He is wise, his eyes are in his head, but the ignorant walk-in darkness (Ecclesiastes 2:14).

And the light that is in the watchful spiritual person, just as it is suitable for his salvation, is also suitable for others... It is a burning lamp, which is placed on the lampstand to illuminate everyone in the house (Matthew 5:15). And the lamp is lit with oil. This oil was the secret to the success of the spiritual life of the five wise virgins, and they are an example of a healthy spiritual vigil (Matt. 25). What does oil symbolize?

And in the oil in the lamp of the watcher, symbolizes the Holy Spirit and his work...

The symbols of oil for the Holy Spirit are very clear in the Bible. And he represented the holy anointing with which the Holy Spirit descends, as in the kings anointing the priests in the Old Testament. And as in the sacrament of the anointing of the Chrism in the New Testament (1 John 2:27, 20). The five wise, watchful virgins, who kept the oil in their vessels, symbolize the souls who watch over their salvation, who keep the work of the Holy Spirit in them...

But what are the details of this spiritual vigil? And how is it?

## **How to stay Vigil**

**To be Vigil on your spiritual goal**

**To be Vigil on the means**

**to be vigil in your spiritual wars**

**Watch out for the gradual falling**

**Watch out for change and new concepts**

**Be Vigil on your spiritual growth**

## **Be Vigil on your service**

Everyone agrees to the spiritual vigil. but how?

No one will ever oppose you. If you tell him about the necessity of spiritual vigilance, this is an obvious matter that the Lord has commanded us, and it has been mentioned in many verses of the Holy Bible. But the important thing is:

What is this spiritual vigil? How is it? What are its details? What is the

This is what we will talk about now, by the will of the Lord: First:

### **To be vigil on your spiritual goal**

Have a healthy spiritual goal:

The spiritual man who watches over his salvation, is a person with a strong fixed goal that does not change. This goal is the love of God, and the kingdom of God is in his heart.

Do you have this goal? Or do you live without a goal, without a plan, without a fixed direction, a day that delivers you to a day, and a night that delivers you to a night, without knowing what you are in...?!

Set a spiritual goal for yourself. And he kept watch over this goal constantly, and watched it lest it weakens or changes. And do not be like many, who began with the Spirit and were completed by the flesh (Galatians 3:3), because they were not watchful.

How easy it is to change your goal on the road if you are not watchful...

Many started with the right goal of loving God. And as a manifestation of this love, or as an expression of this love, they entered the sphere of service, because they wanted people to enter into the love of God like them.

Over time, the service turned into a goal, in which they lost their love for God. And they gave the service all their effort, time and thinking, until they had no time left for God to spend in prayer or meditation...!

Thus, the lives of these people stopped, and accordingly their service stopped, and it no longer had a spiritual nature!

Or others for the love of God entered the service. And because they were not vigilant over themselves, the service for them turned over time into a form of leadership, control, authority, and assertion of the superiority of the Self, and the Self replaced God, and their service was lost.

Some started with the love of God as a valid goal. And out of their love for God, they wanted to delve deeper into His knowledge, and they searched for this knowledge in books...

Over time, books became their goal. And knowledge expanded until it departed from the love of God, and they got lost in various knowledges. Some of them have fallen into doubts, or others have fallen into doubts. They were so intrigued by knowledge that they turned into a pure mind that is not occupied by the love of God! Knowledge brought them into conflict with those who disagreed with them. And in their struggles, they forgot God, who they are fighting for. And they were swept away by the whirlpool that swept away many...

As for you, if you enter into service or knowledge, watch over yourself, and be keen on your true goal, which is the love of God and His kingdom over your heart...

Watch out for the side goals...

Or beware of side matters, which steal you while you are not paying attention and not staying up late, and turn into goals! You seek it with all your heart, forgetting your true goal...

Stay up, then, search yourself from time to time, and search for your goals. And remember the words of Saint Arsenius:

“Reflect, O Asrani, on what you came out for.”

And St. Asrani had every right to address himself with this phrase, because many entered monasticism “for the greatness of their love for the King Christ” ... But if they were not vigilant on their spiritual goal, they developed over time, and they forgot this love, and they forgot their vows and promises. The first, they turned into a completely different situation from the situation in which they have started this spiritual path.

I am afraid that your soul will look in a mirror and say who is this?! I am not what I see in the mirror!

She looks at herself after a while, and finds in her place another personality, not the same one who spiritually started the spiritual path, but for not being vigilant about her goal, she changed without knowing...

And the person who is keen on saving himself, if he notices a change in his goal, treats it quickly, and fixes it quickly, paying attention to himself, and he is not given an opportunity for this change in which he proves his existence and establishes his feet...

Just as a person watch over his goal and observes it, he should also watch over the means he uses to achieve his goal, taking into consideration that they are spiritual and valid to lead him to the goal.

### **To be Vigil on the means**

The spiritual goal, the means leading to it, should be a spiritual means like it... The spiritual person must watch over his means, review them, and see whether they led him to his goal or not. And what's the reason.

And he may have spiritual means, but the routine entered into it...

He must then review and observe himself: Have his prayers, psalms, and readings turned into formalities and routines, and became soulless and fruitless? Did his confession of his sins

become a mere habit while remaining the same? Did he eat it without reverence and real repentance?

Then the other means by which he takes to reach the love of God, are they filled with love, or have they become singular in and of themselves, in which the love of God does not appear at all...

And he who watches over his salvation, guards against means that turn into goals...

Is service, for example, just a means of connecting with God? Or has the service turned into a goal in itself, and global methods and non-spiritual methods that do not please God can enter into it! It has also become an area for appearance, and just an act of activity or intelligence!

Has loneliness also been transformed into a goal, so that man sits in it alone, without sitting with God in his unity, and without doing any spiritual work in it?!

Has the love of people turned into personal relationships and human friendships, in which God does not enter, and does not have any spiritual goal, nor any spiritual fruit... Just a social work!!

Has virtue become mere eagerness to please others, or self-satisfaction with itself, without becoming a means by which the Lord controls the heart?

And has fasting become just an exercise in strengthening the will and suppressing the body, or has it become just a habit or obedience to church laws, or not to slander others, without God entering it?

The person who watches over his own salvation, watches his means and treats them...

lest it all turns into a routine, and into a habit, and he forgets the original goal of it, which is the love of God...! Certainly, Satan has no interest in fighting practices that have a spiritual form, but that has nothing to do with the love of God, nor depth nor spirit... So, watch over yourself, treat, and correct your path to God. And what else do you sleep on?

**to be vigil in your spiritual wars**



The person who watches over his salvation, watches every sin that seeks him. He pays full attention to the internal and external wars that attack his spiritual life. And he is not only watchful, but watchful and fighting, so that Satan will not defeat him...

Because many sins are preceded by negligence or negligence...

So, a person falls into sin without realizing it, and when he feels that he has fallen, he has become involved and has gone a long way in it. Therefore, we ask God, in analyzing the curtain prayer, saying "Give us an awake mind" that is, attentive and not unaware...

Satan works in the dark, so that we do not perceive or see his deeds, that is why the Lord called him "the ruler of darkness" (Luke 22:53). This is the one who works in outer darkness, outside of life with God... The state of self-negligence is a state of darkness in which you neither see nor perceive...

A person who stays vigil is not easy to be deceived by Satan...

And as St. Paul the Apostle says about Satan "for we are not ignorant of his thoughts" (2 Corinthians 2:11). The person who watches over his spiritual life, the Lord gives him by this vigil the grace of discernment and discernment, and he will have the spiritual experience by which he understands the tricks of the enemy and escapes from them...

And Satan does not strike him with a left blow or a right blow

And the strike of the north is leniency and tolerance for sin and idleness. As for the stroke of the right hand, it is an exaggeration in the spiritual path, whereby a person feels above what he should (Romans 12:3).

A person who stays vigil, has a wise mind, is aware of the tricks of the enemy...

Sin cannot deceive him. And he can fully discern the sins that wear sheep's clothing, and come to him in the form of virtue! He can distinguish the cruelty that comes to him in the name of firmness, and the lust that comes to him in the name of love and kindness. He can discern the love of people's praise, which comes to him in the form of setting a good example for their benefit... Thus, in all the wars that he experiences abroad or the feelings inside, he remembers the words of St. John the Beloved (1 John 4:1):

Do not believe every spirit. Rather, test the spirits, are they from God?

This is because Satan, as the book said, “changes his form into the likeness of an angel of light” (1 Corinthians 11:14). And if he pushes someone to rise above in spiritual matters, without wisdom and advice, but he raises him to bring him down from a height, or to throw him into pride, or to bring him to a level that is in him, then causes him to fall into depression and confusion...

As for the watchful person, he does not accept advice from Satan, no matter how sincere or useful it seems!! And if Satan changes his form to the likeness of an angel of light, then this alerts us to an important point, which is that he cannot continue to:

The watcher is not deceived by visions or false dreams...

Who is in heedlessness, visions and dreams may deceive him. As for the watcher of his spirituality, he examines all of them, distinguishes what is from God and rejects the rest

I do not want to go into too much detail about demonic wars. We have a book that we will publish next month, God willing, spiritual wars, in which there is an essential chapter on demonic wars. As for now, we focus on the spiritual vigil in these wars, and we say:

A vigil person does not enter into war, while he is in a state of weakness...

He does not enter into a fight with Satan unless he is ready for him, his sword on his thigh from the terrors of the night. But if he feels weakness within him, he is far from every external war provoked by the devils. Rather, he escapes from pitfalls as much as he can, no matter how light they seem...

Flee from near sins, and from distant sins as well...

Among the sins that Satan paves the way for after a week, a month or a year, and he says to himself in the watchful eye... I know that this track will tire me out, even after a long time, so staying away from it from now is better and safer...

Thus, he watches himself from the inside, and watches the enemy from the outside

This is the spiritually watchful person: he constantly watches himself, his feelings, thoughts, and the inner state of his heart. If he finds in himself a certain weakness, or at one time a tendency towards sin, or an intentional laxity in resisting it... he hastens to establish an emergency for himself, increases his guard, and supports it with deep spiritual means...

He does not let the enemy attack him while he is in a state of heedlessness or indifference, or a state of weakness or indifference. As one of the saints said:

Sin is preceded by either lust, heedlessness, or forgetfulness

And the watcher guards against all of these. And he watches himself and sees what works for it, strengthens it, and does not allow it to be an easy prey for the enemy of goodness, who is only tempted to prey on it. And if he finds the war too intense for him, he shouts as he cuts the curtain prayer: “Lord, you know the vigilance of my enemies. And the weakness of my nature you know, O Creator. Cover me with the wings of your goodness, lest I fall asleep in the sleep of death.”

This is what the watcher does, who watches himself. That is why I tell you frankly:

Watch yourself well, instead of people watching you

And as Saint Macarius the Great said, “Judge yourself before they judge you.” Wake up for yourselves. Examine yourselves from the inside. Watch your thoughts, feelings and senses.

And if one of you is not watchful, and does not watch himself, and someone else watches him, and finds fault in him, and directs it to him, or criticizes him for it, then he should not be angry... Because it is the case of a person who does not live in a spiritual awakening, that God sends someone to awaken him. As Saint John Chrysostom said:

He who rebukes you for your sins, make him your friend...

You should be thankful like this, who did not let you continue in your slumber, and wake you up. Like a person walking on the road, in front of him is a ditch that he will fall into while he is not turning around, so he finds someone who will pull him away from it, even with violence, even with a strong word. The important thing is that he saved him, so he deserves thanks.

Yes, if you are oblivious to yourself, then you need someone to warn you to wake up, this one who wakes you up may be a friend, alerting you in kindness and secret, or a guide explaining to you what you are in and what you must do. It may be one of your enemies or one of your opponents who wakes you up, criticizing you, swearing at you, or attacking you, because of your mistakes. But anyway... it wakes you up...

Rejoice in the one who woke you up, even if he did it violently...

He considered him like an angel who went to prison and struck St. Peter's side to wake him and save him (Acts 12:7). Or consider him like the whale that swallowed Jonah, to save him from drowning in the sea...

Do not be upset, then, if an insult or a problem awakens you. Say as the psalmist said in the psalm: "It is better for me, O Lord, that you have humiliated me. That I may learn your commandments" (Psalm 119).

Keep your watch. Put in front of your principles to help you continue staying up late.

Doctrines, verses from the Bible, or sayings of saints, you put them in front of you on your desk, or hang them in front of you on the wall, or write them in a notebook so that you can read them constantly as if it were a "ticket book" (Malachi 3:16). Or constantly contact people of principle, or of higher levels of spirit, whom you both see as you awaken yourself. And you repent of your sins, and you return to your vigils...

Contact someone who reveals your weaknesses, and don't run away from him...

And don't get angry at him at all. It wakes you up.

And if you are watching over your salvation, watching it, watching every sin that fights you, watching the devils and all their plans and all their snares... There is another important piece of advice, which is:

As you watch your apparent sins, so watch your hidden sins:

Take care of this as well... I mean the sins that reside in the depths of the soul from within, the sins that lie in the depths of the subconscious mind, and which are a source of thoughts, thoughts, dreams and movements of the soul that seem involuntary... Watch all these, and try to treat them.

Be a guard worm against yourself. It represents the wise sower

The sower is fully alert, attentive to everything that surrounds his planting and what is necessary for him. He watches the weather, heat, cold, wind, storms, and protects his plants from all this. It also monitors the dates of irrigation, and the dates of organic and chemical fertilizers. And monitors the pests or insects that attack the planting, and resist them and get rid of them. It also monitors the wilting or yellowing of its plantations, knowing its cause and treating it. And he watches the growth and the fruits... This is a successful farmer, who is vigilant about the interests of his crops. Do the same for your life, and you will live...

Watch every line from the beginning...

And don't wait for it to grow up and take root... as soon as you catch a glimpse of the thought. And don't wait for it to grow up and take root... As soon as you catch a glimpse of a wrong thought coming from afar, expel it or run away from it, and don't let it enter your mind and get hold of it. Do not let the thought turn into a feeling, and weaken your will. Rather, as an observer who is vigilant in preserving his borders, he warns of danger if he sees an enemy coming from afar... This is how sin resisted it before it took control. Tell her, as the psalmist said in the Psalm: "Oh, wretched daughter of Babylon... Blessed is he who takes hold of your children and buries them on the rock" (Psalm 136). In your spiritual vigil, pay attention to the following point:

### **Watch out for the gradual fall**

It is very easy for a person to feel a sudden fall. As for the gradual decline that takes a long time, he may not feel it... This in particular requires vigilance and vigilance.

And the devil - as Al-Bustan said about him - twists ropes, making nets out of them to catch a person. It is very thoughtful. Sometimes a person may strike one blow at a speed, and he may arrange to make him sin a plan that will take 5 years, or ten years or more...

He attracts him little by little, in thought, will and feeling, in an indistinct way, until he drops him, and during this long period he has changed, and his inner state has helped him fall, or the fall is just a simple step about what preceded it

Perhaps during this period, he would have kept him away from the modes of grace...

Keep him away from the Bible, because he knows everything in it!

And keep him away from the Agpeya, so that he can devote himself to his special, heartfelt prayers!

And keep him away from spiritual meetings, for the love of unity and calm!

And keep him away from spiritual readings, arguing that meditation is better!

And keep it away from eating, in the name of humility, and feeling unworthy!

Perhaps he kept him away from prayer as well, because he was busy serving others!

Satanic arguments, there are responses to them. But it takes a long time!

In all of this, human life is weakened from within, and the earth is completely paved, for Satan to plant in its whatever thoughts and desires he wants... then he strikes the blow he wants.

If you find yourself like this, take great care of yourself. And you cannot realize this, unless you are watching yourself, examining yourself carefully, firmly, and without compliments or excuses...

If you feel that you are not in your old care or your previous scrutiny...

And if you feel that you are not in your former fervor, nor in your first love, nor your discipline, nor in your caution, nor in your adherence to the will, nor your abstinence from sin ... And if you see that you are allowing yourself what you did not allow before, on the pretext that this no longer stumbles you, and that no longer tires you, and that you are no longer affected by the stumbling blocks... Then turn to yourself, and know that the enemy has drawn you down, and that he has prepared an ambush for you...! Your reins are starting to slip away from you.

Know that being careful is better, and staying up late is necessary, even for saints...

And remember that sin “has cast many wounded, and all its slain are strong” (Proverbs 7:26). Return to your old watch over the salvation of your soul, and return to your eagerness and fear...

And know that sin can be escaped by humility, not by adventurism. And you must be vigilant for your salvation no matter how high you rise... So, David the Prophet, with reaching the level of prophecy, and with the spirit descending upon him, was not above the level of sin or fall! So was Solomon with all the wisdom he reached, and with God appearing to him more than once...! (1 Kings 3:5, 29).

Remember the gradual incline, is similar to a hot pot and how it cools...

Suppose that a vessel was on the fire, and it came down from it while it was very hot. He does not cool down all at once, but rather a little bit, very slowly, and in an unnoticeable manner, so that if you stand next to him and touch him from one moment to another you will not see a difference in his condition from one moment to another. Nevertheless, the coldness works in it, until there comes a time when it has completely cooled down, likewise in the spiritual life, in the way of gradual decline, which requires vigilance and vigilance in the person to notice it, and feels that it is getting cold...g cold...

So, you have to keep an eye out for your periods of indolence...

It requires a full vigil... If you find yourself not inclined to prayer or spiritual work, do not let this feeling last with you. And as Mar Isaac said: If you want to sleep and not pray, force yourself to pray at night and add psalms to it...

The person who is vigilant about his salvation, does not give in to apathy. ...

If the apathy continues with an inattentive person, he may end up in sin. As for the one who maintains his spiritual vigil, he overcomes apathy and returns to his heat.

Every spiritual person, no matter how watchful, is liable to fall asleep at times with human weakness. And as the book says, "Goofs, who feels them?! » (Psalm 19:12). But this watcher is distinguished by the fact that he wakes up quickly, because he returns to wakefulness and awakening. If he falls asleep a little, he rises and sings with the psalm "I get up very early" (Psalm 57).

He quickly returns to his praises and his connection to God...

He sings again, "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready" (Psalm 57) "I slept and slept, then I woke up, because you are with me" (Psalm)... Thus, he quickly returns to his strength and spirituality as David the prophet returned, as if he did not fall, but came back stronger which was...

What, then, is the difference between the fall of a vigil person, and the fall of the negligent and negligent person? The difference is:

the vigil person: His basic condition is to take care of his spirituality. Falling is an accident, and weakness, and he rises from it quickly...

As for the sinful person who is negligent, sin is. His basic condition, and the fall may be with his will or consent, and he is a traitor to the Lord. He may not get up quickly, because of the love of sin in his heart, and his inability to get up, or his unwillingness to get up...!

Beware, then, my brother, from lukewarmness and the gradual fall, and also:

**Watch out for change and new concepts**

Be watchful over yourself, and watch every change that occurs in your spiritual life, and your thoughts and concepts... As the book says, "Test everything. Hold fast to the good" (Thess 5:21). Then you should examine and test everything, if you are watching, and do not let change sweep you away and turn you into someone other than the one who started life with God...

We mean the change that affects your first love for the Lord...

So, look at yourself, you may notice changes that have occurred to you, which you did not allow before... You may notice that you have changed in your style, in your speech, in your dealings, in your dress and appearance... Perhaps you have changed your view of spiritual matters, and your judgment on some global matters... Do not let it pass quietly, but examine it... and look for its causes. It is not only the apparent causes, but rather its deep, buried internal causes...

And look, has your heart changed? Did he turn away from God?

Have you lost your love for the Lord? Has the love of the world started creeping into you? Have you returned your vows and your promises to the Lord? Did you take your hand off the plow and look back? Be honest with yourself to the fullest. This is the way of the watchful person, who does not easily pass changes in front of him, but rather tests everything and clings to the good. See, has your love for prayer changed? Has the spirit and temperature changed?

Do you miss her now like you used to miss her before? Do you pray with the same understanding, depth, meditation and deliberation? Do you consider the time of prayer a spiritual pleasure for you? Do you prefer prayer over every other work? Or does the Lord's words to the angel of the Ephesian church apply to you:

"I have upon you that you have forsaken your first love" (Rev 2:4).

Stay awake, my brother, and watch every change and development that affects your life

The problem of those who are not vigilant about the salvation of their souls, is that their lives change and they are: either they do not feel this change, or they feel it, but they do not care, and they neglect this matter for a long time, carelessly, until it develops into a situation that is difficult to treat...

As for you, the man of God, watch out for changes and watch them.

Also, pay attention to changes in your spiritual perceptions...



It is dangerous to change your assessment of things, and change your concepts. So, watch over this matter and examine it. If you have increased in depth in spiritual matters, and your concepts have increased in depth, then thank God. And if the new concepts are a form of apostasy and reconciliation with the world, its style and its desires, then wake up to yourself and cry for it, and be careful not to move the old frontier” (Proverbs 22:28).

Satan cannot control you while you cling to your sound spiritual concepts, so he resorts to changing your concepts first...!

Watch out for strange ideas to enter you...!

Do not tolerate the entry of these strangers. And remember the words of St. Paul the Apostle: “Do not be conformed to this age” (Romans 12:2), that is, do not become in its shape and likeness... Say to yourself, “I did not think before in this way. what happened to me? » ...

Examine lest strange thoughts, because you imitate others...

In order not to be led in a certain direction, because of your subordination to a person, you revolve with him in his circle without thinking, and unconsciously formed with his thoughts and tendencies, and thus you changed from before... and became under a certain influence, not under your first ideals...!

so, watch also the atmosphere around you, and its effect on you...

Observe the currents around you, whether at home, work, or around friends, or the intellectual currents that affect you, whether from readings, headphones, or the behavior of the surrounding environment... lest all of this push you in certain directions and affect your thought, style, or goal. Be watchful, then, on yourself.

Watch your trends in life and examine them well

Because many - in their spiritual vigil - watch only the details of their actions. As for you, also observe your general attitudes, your overall outlook on life, your hopes, your desires... As a person, for example, he had the idea of dedicating his whole life to the Lord, then he notices that his current path cannot lead him in this direction.

... who watches over his eternity, looks and checks where his steps lead him ... Is his goal the same, or is it lost? Or is he no longer in his prime...

That is, he did not lose the goal, but lost the degree...

He is still on the road, but not at the same level... that is, he fell even a little bit from his first step. Let him look for the cause and treat it, if he is watching over himself and on his level. This brings us to another point:

## **Be Vigil on your spiritual growth**

The spiritual person is not only supposed to not make mistakes, as this is a negative aspect. Rather, he is supposed to grow in the way of perfection, as the Lord commanded, and said, "Be perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

And all those whose growth has stopped, either they have slackened, or they have fallen... And the continuity of progress gives a person spiritual heat, and he is preoccupied with the positives, not the negatives, as it gives him the humility of the heart, as he constantly looks at higher degrees than him...

And St. Paul the Apostle said about this growth, "I forget what is behind, and stretch to what is ahead" (Philippians 3:3). He also said, "Run that you may obtain" (1 Corinthians 24).

Watch your growth, for the road ahead is long...

And beware of standing, lest you are going back.

But before you the ideals of the Book, and the ideals of the saints, in every spiritual work, and every virtue, and push yourself forward. And you cried yourself that you did not arrive yet. And as St. Paul the Apostle said, "Brothers, I do not think that I have grasped," but "I am striving so that I may perceive" (Philippians 3:13,12). Brothers, I do not think that I have grasped," but "I am striving so that I may perceive" (Philippians 3:13,12).

Calculate yourself, and compare your condition with those before you...

Perhaps you will find many colleagues, who started the road with you, then they preceded you and left you behind... In fact, you may find disciples of yours, or young people in the church, who walked with fervor and seriousness and speed, and they preceded you as the turtle raced the hare, because he was sleeping... So, stay up...

Make sure that every hour steps you towards eternity...

You must take a step towards holiness and perfection...

And watch your time, lest you be wasted in vain in the affairs of this vain world! Rather, I remember the words of the Messenger, "See how you walk carefully, not as ignorant but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians: 16, 15). Yes, "redeeming the time"...

I say this, because many of those who did not watch over their souls, and were attracted by the whirlpool of life, have finally awakened and found that they are in their forty, fifty, or sixty years of age, and have wasted life in vain, in fulfilling vain desires, or in the fleeting affairs of the world, without doing anything for their eternity. Even the little ones preceded them to the kingdom...!

So, run with all your might, so that you may redeem the lost time. Watch for the salvation of your soul, and push it towards the desired perfection. Many started late, but arrived quickly because of their seriousness and spiritual vigil, like St. Augustine who said to the Lord, "You are too late in your love." But he ran and got...

Watch, then, for your time, to make up for the years that the locusts have eaten. And run with all your might towards perfection. Arsani the Great, when he contemplated this perfection, said to the Lord:

So far, I haven't started... Lord grants me to start

So, my brother, ask yourself, where do your days and nights go? May it be a successful journey towards perfection... so that if the time comes when he weighs, he will find ears full of wheat. He finds your soul filled with his love, so he says to you, "Enter into the joy of your master."

Watch yourself, and make sure you're on the road...

He is not standing, sleeping, or turning back, but he is constantly walking forward. Because the first phrase we say in the great psalm in the night prayers is "Blessed are they who are without a blemish on the way, who walk in the law of the Lord, and seek Him with all their heart."

Watching yourself, ask yourself constantly: Where am I now? Where are my thoughts and feelings? Am I really on the way? I wish I was not only walking, but also running, as the saints ran with all their might, reaching the arms of the Father...

And a final word to say at the end of this topic:

### **Be Vigil on your service:**

Watch over all those whom the Lord has placed in your responsibility, for you to reach Him. And remember the Lord's saying to the father: "You have preserved those whom you have given me... and none of them has perished." "The work that you have given me to do I have completed" (John 17:4,12).

The subject of staying up late in the service is long, and I don't think a book like this can fit it, rather it needs a special book.

## **The Vigil with God**

It is good, my brother, to watch over your salvation...

But you do not benefit, if you are alone in this vigil. You cannot by your effort, without aid from above, guard yourself against enemy attacks. But the one who truly guards you is God... As you say at the end of Psalm 126 of the Sleep Prayer:

If the Lord does not guard the city, then in vain the guards stay awake.

The Church reminds you of this in the psalms of sunset and the second night. as such

She taught you to say in the curtain prayer: "Lord, you know the vigilance of my enemies, and the weakness of my nature, you know it, O Creator. Cover me with the wings of your goodness, lest I fall into the sleep of death." Therefore, in every vigil for the salvation of yourself. Remember what the Lord said to his holy disciples:

"Without me, you can do nothing" (John 1:5).

And so, in all your holy struggle, do not struggle alone, because "the branch of itself cannot bear fruit, unless it abides in the vine" (John 15:4) ... The vine that reaches it the juice of life, and through it lives, thrives, grows and bears fruit. Be you like this...

Stay up late, but with God, who neither sleeps nor sleeps...

Trust that you alone cannot save yourself. Rather, "The Lord will protect you. The Lord will overshadow your right hand. The Lord protects you from all evil.

The Lord preserves. The Lord preserves your entry and your exit" (Psalm 120).

That is why you also say in this psalm in the sunset and the second night: "My help is from the Lord...".

The Church has chosen psalms for you to pray in the night prayer, all of which speak of the Lord's help for you, his preservation and protection...

You cry out to the Lord, saying, "Have mercy on us, O God, have mercy on us, for we have often been filled with temptation" Psalm 122 (123). Immediately after that, she says, "Were it not for the Lord is with us, strong, people rose against us, they would have swallowed us alive... Blessed be the Lord, who did not deliver us as prey to their teeth." We escaped like a sparrow from the snare of the hunters. The trap broke and we survived. Our help is in the name of the Lord..." Psalm 123 (124).

And it says this in the Psalm "Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion" Psalm 124 (Psalm 125). She says after him, "Lord, I send back our captivity like torrents in the south" Psalm 125 (126).

It is one meaning, about the Lord's work for you, and his vigil to keep you, repeated in all the psalms and pieces of the night.

So, the guard is not your guard, but you are watching over it with God who guards you. So, you meditate on his preservation for you, and you ask him in the great psalm saying, "My soul longs for your salvation." "Revive me as your word."

"Restrain my eyes, lest we see vanities." "Lord, I am yours, so save me" "You are my helper and my helper... I mean, so I am saved" "Righten my steps as you say, and let no iniquity prevail" "I cried to you, and you saved me" "Look at my affliction, and I will deliver me" Your hand is for my salvation... You have gone astray like a lost sheep, so seek Your servant, for I have not forgotten Your commandments.)

So, from the Lord: saving, salvation, and aid

And in the night prayers as we ask God for help,

We also ask him for knowledge, guidance, guidance, and understanding...

We say to him in the great psalm: "Teach me, O Lord, your ways, give me the understanding of your ways." "Your servant is I, give me understanding, and I know your testimonies." "Give me understanding, and I will search for your law." "Teach me your rights, and the path of your justice, understand me." For it is I who have become." Psalm 118 (115).

How beautiful it is for a person to stand before God in such humility. As an incompetent one asks for strength, and as an ignorant one asks for knowledge.

Thus, the Church teaches us to address God in the vigil of the night...

The person we see during the day fills the world with movement, activity and work, and he may stand in many areas teaching another son... we see him in the wake of the night, saying to the Lord "Teach me, understand me, guide me..."

And in the night prayers, he takes the strength that supports him during the day...

Poor, then, is the one who sleeps at night, without staying up late, and does not take strength from God

It works during the day...

But does the spiritual person do this only during the night vigil and the night prayers, or during the day as well?

The spirit also stays awake during the day, and thus works with God.

We can review the prayers offered by the church during the day, and see the same spirit. For example, what we say in the early prayer:

Enlighten our minds, hearts, and understandings, O Lord of all

Bestow on us in this present day that we please you in it.

So, it is a gift from God to us, to give us this grace, to please Him... Really, what are the deepest prayers that the Church teaches us.

I leave you now to contemplate this great treasure. In the wake of the day and the vigil of the night... And to the meeting in the book: Steps to God.

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In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, one God Amin

The vigil of the body helps the vigil of the soul, if it is vigil in a spiritual way... But the vigil of the soul is more important. And if the soul stays awake, it makes the body stay awake with it. What is the vigil of the soul? And how is it? What is the meaning of staying up late with God? What is the ritual of the church to watch the body with the soul? About all this, this little book wants to tell you. I wish you had listened to him...

Shenouda III