



THE PRESENCE



“At a time when demons should weigh us down, dull our sensitivities and increase the desires of the flesh, prayer at night heightens our attentiveness to God and inflames our desire for Him and the spiritual life.”

While Men Slept

(Why Christians Should Pray at Night)

The devil understands quite well that the helplessness of man is revealed at the highest proportion while he is asleep. The biblical account of the tares being sowed among the wheat underscored the fact the devil and his agents are more active at night, when men are sleeping. The bible made us to understand that after the sower had sowed good seed (wheat), an enemy came at night and sow bad seed (tares) along side the good. It is invariably clear that the purpose of the devil was to derail the growth and the progress of the good seed.

Principalities and powers, demons, and evil spirits are more ferocious at night when you are helplessly sleeping. While you sleep they plant and deposit all kinds of evil on you. This is why the bible repeatedly mentioned that we should watch and pray. On the contrary, the devil will do everything within his power to ensure you don't wake up and pray at night. He will allow you to spend hours in front of the Television box; he will provide opportunities for you to be on the computer all day and night; he will come up with diverse inconsequential activities simply to hinder you from praying, but there is always a raging battle the moment you intend to spend a little time with the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

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While Men Slept



One of the most extraordinary and clear teachings about the value of vigils (praying at night) that I've ever read comes from an Eastern Saint named Theophan the Recluse. It is Divine Wisdom and the example of our Lord Himself that guides us to take up such a practice. Praying at night humbles the mind and body and makes us more receptive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and docile to the will of God in our lives. At a time when demons should weigh us down, dull our sensitivities and increase the desires of the flesh, prayer at night heightens our attentiveness to God and inflames our desire for Him and the spiritual life.

“And Jesus continued all night in prayer to God (Luke 6:12).

Here is the foundation and beginning of Christian All-night Vigils. Prayerful ardor chases away sleep, and exhilaration of the spirit does not allow one to notice the passing of time. True men of prayer do not notice this; it seems to them that they had just begun to pray, and meanwhile day has already appeared. But until one reaches such perfection, one must take on the labor of vigils. Solitaries have borne this and continue to bear it. Cenobites too have borne this and continue to bear it. Reverent and God-fearing lay people have borne this and continue to bear it. But although vigil comes with difficulty, its fruit remains in the soul, directly, and constantly present - tranquility of soul and contrition, along with the weakening and exhaustion of the body. It is a state very valuable for those who are zealous about prospering in the spirit! That is why in places where vigils are established, they do not want to give them up. Everyone acknowledges how difficult it is, but no one has a desire to rescind this order of things, for the sake of the profit which the soul receives from vigils. Sleep, more than anything relaxes and feeds the flesh; vigils, more than anything, humble it. One who has enough sleep is burdened by spiritual deeds and is cold toward them. He who is vigilant is quick in movement like a gazelle, and burns in spirit. If the flesh, like a slave, must be taught to be good, there is no better way to succeed in this than through frequent vigils. Here the flesh fully feels the power of the spirit over it and learns to submit to it, while the spirit acquires the habit of reigning over the flesh. (St. Theophan the Recluse)

