

Meditations: Sunday of the Nineteenth Week of Ordinary Time (Year C)

Some reflections that can assist
our prayer during the 19th
week of Ordinary Time.

- An eager vigilance
- Sentinel, be alert!
- Safeguarding the treasure

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THIS SUNDAY'S readings invite us to
be ever vigilant, as we await our

Lord's coming. In the Letter to the Hebrews, the sacred author praises the great faith of the ancient patriarchs: "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go . . . For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (*Heb* 11:8, 10). On the first night of Passover in Egypt, when the Israelites were freed from slavery and called to be the people of God, Yahweh asked them to await the Lord's passing "with stout heart," offering sacrifices, awake and standing (cf. *Wis* 18:6-9). From then on, year after year, the people celebrated Passover as a memorial of salvation, with this same expectant and attentive attitude: God is passing nearby once again.

Through Baptism, we become part of the new people of God, the Church,

and we hope one day to inherit the promised land of heaven. Now, in our daily lives, our Lord seeks us out and comes to meet us. Jesus wants his disciples to have this same attitude of vigilance: “Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them” (*Lk 12:35-37*).

Faith impels us to live like this, awake and vigilant. With the help of grace, we have within our reach not letting our guard down and remaining attentive to the Lord’s passing. “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for” (*Heb 11:1*); the believer acquires firm certainty in

the divine promises and an anticipatory possession of heavenly goods. This living faith – in which we can always grow – leads us to the conviction that what is unseen will be fulfilled at God’s appointed time. Thus desire and trust in God grows in our soul; our heart learns to wait without becoming tired, grounded in the present and open to what is to come. Leo XIV exhorts us: “Dear brothers and sisters, let us not be discouraged! Even in the dark moments of life, when time passes without giving us the answers we seek, let us ask the Lord to come again and find us where we are waiting for him. He is generous, and he will come soon!”^[1]

IN ANCIENT TIMES, walled cities had a watchman in the tower who remained vigilant at night, guarding

the people and looking towards the east, awaiting the signs of the day. People immersed in the darkness of the city would sometimes call out: *Custos, quid de nocte?* Watchman, how goes the night? (*Is* 21:11). The watchman, who was paying close attention to all the signs, would exclaim, “Upon a watchtower I stand, O Lord, continually by day, and at my post I am stationed whole nights” (*Is* 21:8).

St. Josemaría, making use of these words of Isaiah, encouraged Christians to foster this same attitude of vigilance: “Watchman, how goes the night? . . . Strive to increase your self-giving and loving vigilance over details, and to pray and mortify yourself a little more. Realize that the Holy Church is like a great army in battle array. And you, within that army, are defending one ‘front’ on which there are attacks, engagements with the enemy and

counter-attacks. Do you see what I mean? This readiness to grow closer to God will lead you to turn your days, one after the other, into days on guard.”^[2] —

Through faith, we know that Christ passes by our side and calls us. And at every moment, He expects a generous response from us. By discovering our Lord’s presence in our daily circumstances, we learn “to live each moment with a lively awareness of eternity.”^[3] — With this interior attitude, everything we do, small or great, seemingly important or not, can be a path leading to God. Nothing, then, is indifferent. As the founder of Opus Dei stressed: “Do everything for Love. Thus there will be no little things: everything will be great. Perseverance in little things for love is heroism.”^[4] —

“YOU ALSO must be ready,” Jesus told his disciples, “for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour” (*Lk* 12:40). At first sight, it might seem that this attitude of vigilance implies a fear of God or fear of one’s own failures. But it is quite the opposite. In the same discourse, Jesus clarifies the meaning of his words: “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (*Lk* 12:32). Vigilance is neither a result of anxiety nor a reason for unrest. Our hope is based on knowing that we are heirs to God’s kingdom, a kingdom that is already ours. Our efforts stem from a love that we freely and tirelessly seek. “Our journey on earth, which has to be a divine journey,” Blessed Alvaro wrote, “is a time of ceaseless struggle, a time of holy and co-redemptive combat, entrusted to God’s children, to the daughters and sons of holy Mary . . . By divine vocation, we are committed to this

most beautiful war of love and peace.”^[5] —

“Let us look eagerly to his coming; let Him not find us slumbering,”^[6] St. Augustine urged. Our vigilance, our fight against the sleep that could paralyze us, is focused on safeguarding the divine gifts we have received in the Church. For we possess “a treasure in heaven that never fails, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys” (*Lk* 12:33). To be vigilant “is to strive to be good Christians,”^[7] safeguarding our treasure with all our strength, as Jesus asks us to do: “for where your treasure is, there also your heart will be” (*Mt* 6:21). The effort to protect the treasure entrusted to us can sometimes involve a certain inner tension, but it is a struggle imbued with optimism and hope. For we are aware that this is not a cold and bothersome war, but a vigil of love, which leads us to work diligently to

sanctify our world, caring for our brothers and sisters and our friends. Thus Christians respond joyfully “to the divine voice calling out to us: sentinel, be alert!”^[8] —

If we are aware of having received much, we will be vigilant, with a sense of responsibility. For we know that “from everyone who has been given much, much will be required, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much will be asked” (cf. *Lk* 12:48). In this struggle, we rely on the help of our Lady.

“Mary always listens to us, she is always close to us. And being the Mother of the Son, she shares in the power of the Son, in his goodness. We can always place our whole life in the hands of this Mother, who is always close to each one of us.”^[9] —

^[1] — Leo XIV, Audience, 4 June 2025.

^[2] — St. Josemaría, *Furrow*, no. 960.

[3] St. Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 239.

[4] St. Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 813.

[5] Blessed Alvaro, *Family Letters (II)*, no. 249.

[6] St. Augustine, *Sermon* 361, 19.

[7] St. Josemaría, *Letter 28-III-1973*, no. 9.

[8] St. Josemaría, *Letter* 24, no. 16.

[9] Benedict XVI, Homily, 15 August 2005.