Prayer.

As we draw to an end
This liturgical year
we begin to experience
Far away and nearly invisible
The feint wisps of Advent
Beginning to make its appearance
On the horizon of faith
Consider the dualism
Of closure and opening
Life and after-life

The conclusion of earthly kingdoms
And the emergence of the
Kingdom of God.
Here we stand
Teetering on the cusp
With one foot planted squarely
In the current world
And one foot
Ready to be planted
In the world yet to come.

In this state of in-between-ness
We are vulnerable.
Our anticipation places us at risk. Our eagerness opens us to Every wolf dressed in sheep’ clothing. Not all wolves know they are wolves. Likewise each of us can become wolf And not even know it. Think of all the promises made To keep us locked into the present age: Church revitalization Leadership development Church growth Small groups Capital fund raising. To which Jesus proclaims, “As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.”

All of which is not to say That some of our labors in this age Are not without merit. We need to hold fast to our commitments. We need to honor our word. We need to recognize earthly laws. Be we do need to be wary. We need to discern We must remain vigilant. Beware, Jesus warns us, that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is near!’ Do not go after them.  

Wolves will talk a good talk About preparing for tomorrow. But do not be fooled. They intend to have you for lunch. They want your money (this world) They want your support (this world) They want your heart; In this world, They will tear it right out of your chest If you let them.

Who then, are we to heed? Watch for the prophet The one who comes to prepare the way for Messiah And the world the Messiah Will usher in. Prophets don’t want your money They don’t want to take They want to give. They want your attention They want you to be aware of what is going on around us. “Pay attention to the wars and insurrections. Be aware of the earthquakes, famine, and plagues. Know that when you are arrested, persecuted, and killed It is only an earthy death, For not a hair of your head will perish In the eternal Kingdom of God.

Beware, be alert, and be strong. The happenings of this world Are not coincidental. We should not treat them With blind or indifferent ignorance. We are already living God’s plan.

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1 Luke 21:6  
2 Luke 21:8
We only see our tiny little piece. Hindsight only affords us an educated guess Regarding divine strategy. But from hindsight we should Draw from the well of assurance And know that we remain steadfast In the hand of God.

I can not explain why those Who love you, will turn on you. But I do know that God is in control. I can not explain why some Suffer terribly, Disease, disaster, famine, and death, But I do know that God’s plan is being deployed. I can not explain Why people hate All because of the name of Jesus. Yet, we know, That even this Is a facet of God’s greater design.

Beware, be alert, and be strong.

In the Fifth Century, John the Solitary Counsels Hesychius to “choose vigilance, even in preference to fasting, for vigilance makes the understanding luminous, it keeps the intellect awake, it makes the body still, it is more beneficial than all other labours.”


We know that a prolonged state of Hyper vigilance is counterproductive. Two thousand years of watching and waiting With every expectation that the next moment May be the last May lead one to be tempted to Downplay the importance Or decrease the attention One places on the imminence In Jesus’ voice we he tells us Keep alert Like the wise servants prepared for the arrival of the householder. 4

The editor of Weavings, John S. Mogabgab, writes in the latest edition: “Vigilance is poised attentiveness to the spiritual environment, sensitive awareness of the presence and purpose of God in our midst, uninhibited responsiveness to the flow of Love’s energy at work in the world, (and) constant resistance to temptations that deform that love. For Philotheos of Sinai, Such alertness ‘cleanses the conscience and makes it lucid.’”

5

Beware, be alert, and be strong.

Mindfulness I believe

4 Luke 12:35-40
Is the posture of all disciples of Jesus.
Mindfulness is both
Being alert and being aware
That the old world was,
And is now is.
The earth and its mortal nature was,
And is already gone.
The Kingdom of God both is,
And has already come.
For those who endure
Their souls have already been gained.
For those who remain strong
Salvation has already come.

Mindfulness
Knows that strength
Does not come from within
... the mustard seed amount of faith
has already been planted within you ...
rather strength is a gift
from God
for all those who would claim it
own it
and make it their own.

Mindfulness
Knows that strength
Does not come from knowing;
But from questioning.
Faith is never factual or certain
Otherwise, it wouldn’t be faith.
Faith is being mindful enough
And courageous enough to
Be uninhibited and untiring
In the mortal quest
for divine answers.

Mindfulness
(Finally)
Is knowing that
At this place in the journey
It is impossible to traverse
The un-climbable rock
Of our existence,
To endure the trials and temptations
Of this mortal life,
And to do it Alone.

Endurance comes from community.
This Body of Christ
Is more than his flesh and blood.
This Body of Christ
Is comprised of every living disciple
And of every resurrected Saint.
The Body of Christ
... the whole Body of Christ ...
is necessary to carry us
when we can no longer carry ourselves;
to support the journey of others
when they can no longer make it on
their own,
in order to bring
each and every one of us
to that circle around the heavenly
throne
when every soul is gained
and all former things will have
been passed away. 

Beware, be alert, and be strong.

Beware, my beloved,
That you are not led astray.
Be alert, dear members and friends of Zion;
Mindful of the signs,
Believing that this is according to
God’s greater plan.
And,
Be strong, disciples of Jesus.
Band together and you will endure,
And when these days of dualism
Come to an end,

6 Revelation 21:4
With only the heavenly realm before us,
You will gain your souls.
Of this,
We can be assured.
Amen.