Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“You must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect the Son of Man will come” (Matt 24:44).

1 Cor 1:1-9; Matt 24:42-51

Jesus promises his disciples peace, but it is a dynamic state of openness to surprise and wonder. The grace of the moment is always at hand, so in a spiritual sense, we must be light on our feet and ready to respond to his prompting. St. Paul encourages us to “pray always,” which is to be mindful that God is with us at all times, showing us how to grow and learn.

But this divine presence can also be disruptive. Jesus uses the unsettling image of a thief in the night that the master of the house tries to keep from breaking in. It is hardly a comforting parable for God’s sudden intrusion into our lives. We cannot predict it or control it, and the consequences remind us that no matter how much we try to plan our lives, things can change without warning, forcing us to adapt to crisis and loss. Earthquakes, storms and human actions, including our own errors and sins, impact people every day,

The imagery of surprise was first applied to an early church living in expectation of the Second Coming as imminent. Pastors and ministers of the first faith communities are warned to be faithful in carrying out their responsibilities, because at an hour they least expected, Jesus might come and ask for an accounting.

While the church came to understand that the redemptive mission of Jesus was given to his followers for the long haul of history, the message remains valid in every age, including our own.

We should assume that Jesus can and does come into our lives each day, at a time we least expect, in the grace of the moment and in every opportunity to respond generously to the needs of others. As disciples, we are called to pray always and to be constantly aware that Jesus is present in our thoughts and decisions. This is the essence of the Christian life, and those who live it also know the peace of Christ.

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