



## Brief Patristic Messages



### *“I Sleep and My Heart Watcheth”*

*His Eminence, Metropolitan  
Cyprian of Oropos and Fili*

**O**NE of the essential features of Orthodox spirituality is watchfulness.

**The pious** Christian is obliged to be constantly vigilant in order to guard his heart from the attacks of the enemy, who ceaselessly hammers away at him with evil thoughts, impure fantasies, and impassioned feelings.

**This spiritual** vigilance, accompanied by unceasing prayer—provided that it is practiced with consistency, humility, and a repentant state of mind—purifies man spiritually and bodily and renders him a vessel of the uncontainable God.

**This inner** work is not a formal duty or a virtue which at some point has an end, but it is a lifelong activity, because the Devil also permanently strives to deceive the soul and to separate it from its Bridegroom Christ.

**God-loving** souls, wholly dedicated to the love of our Lord with attention and prayer, have been vouchsafed to repeat with humility and gratitude: “I sleep and my heart watcheth.”

**Holy Angels** cover these blessed souls even in their sleep; thus, as soon as they open their eyes upon waking, their entire being turns in glorification to our Lord, and the day begins with a Divine blessing.

**With a deep** consciousness of his weakness, the believer noetically falls before the Cross of our Lord and calls upon heavenly assistance to be freed from the roaring lion.

**The environment** that our age offers us is now nearly universally anti-hesychastic.

**Consequently**, a great stress on watchfulness is required, since these days, the Patristic saying “*He who wishes to be saved must have many eyes,*” is more relevant than ever before.

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**May the eyes** of our soul be ever turned towards our Redeemer, that all of the wiles of the Devil might be put to naught.

**The God-inspired** Abba Barsanouphios wonderfully advises us:

*“Those sailing on the sea—even when they find themselves in calm, but are still on the open sea—expect disturbance, danger and shipwreck; and to them, the temporary calm is of no succor. For they are secure only when they arrive at the port itself, at the very mouth of which many have drowned. So, in the same way, as long as the sinner is in the world, he must always be in dread of shipwreck.”*

**May the** exhortation of our Lord be our constant companion on this, our dangerous sea voyage:

*“Watch, be vigilant, and pray...  
and what I say unto you,  
I say unto all: Watch!”*

*Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women, 2/15 May 2005*

