

A Thief in the Night

A burglar broke into a house one night, looking for valuables when a voice in the dark said "JESUS is watching you". He nearly jumped out of his skin, clicked his flashlight off and froze. After a bit of silence, he shook his head and continued. Just as he pulled the stereo out to disconnect the wires, he heard a voice clearly say, "JESUS is watching you"! Freaked out, he shined his light around frantically looking for the source of the voice, finally the beam came to rest on a parrot in the corner of the room, "Did you say that"? he hissed. "Yep, I'm just trying to warn you that he is watching you," parrot confessed then squawked. The burglar relaxed "warn me? huh, who in the world are you!" "I'm MOSES", replied the bird. The burglar laughed, "Moses, what kind of people would name a bird Moses?" The bird answered, "the same kind of people that would name their Rottweiler JESUS"!!!

Growing up I remember my grandpa Vic and grandma Clara having a sign in their house with a picture of a 44 pistol on it. The sign said, this house is protected by a man with a gun 5 nights a week. You guess the night!

I am sure that many of us have thought about the possibility of a thief entering into our house and invading our privacy. There are certainly many devices (other than guns) that are on the market today to notify us when an intruder might be breaking into our home.

But what about our spiritual lives and our spiritual well-being?

There was a good friend of mine, Bob Helbach, who was recently was killed in a UTV accident. When Leigh Ann and I went to visit with his wife Helen, she said that "death came like a thief in the night" for her husband Bob. I assured her that Bob was prepared with his spiritual and prayer life. Bob took the time each day to pray, to attend daily Mass as much as he could and yet manage a wonderful potato farm business, served the Wisconsin potato growers association and his community, and attended sporting events. Even though his life was busy, he knew that priority #1 was having a relationship with the Lord and I am sure that his heart was prepared to meet our Lord Jesus.

Today's gospel we hear Jesus speaking to us about the importance of prioritizing our relationship with the Lord and being prepared for when he does come to call us to eternal life. There are a number of times that I hear people say, "Why should I be preoccupied with the coming of the Lord? I've got other priorities in life." I am just too busy to go to Mass and develop my relationship with God."

The song "I Want to be Ready" includes the lyrics "No man knows the day nor the hour when the Lord will surely come. That's why we gotta get our house in order, don't let Him catch you with your work undone."

How are you doing in organizing your "spiritual home" for the Lord? Would we be prepared if he came tomorrow to call us to eternal life? Or would we be scurrying around to try to make last minute preparations when he calls us?

So many times when I go to visit a person who has a terminal illness, they say to me, "Deacon Jim I am ready to go." When I hear that, it makes me happy to know that they have prepared for Christ's coming in their lives and have peace in knowing that they have a strong relationship with Jesus. But yet it also makes me reflect on my life and ask myself, if I too would feel that peace if I was in their situation.

How many of us would really like to know the date and time of our passing? Would we live life different? Would our priorities change?

This weekend is a good time to think about how prepared we are for the Lord and if we are not, to work on preparing our lives to meet him when he comes to call us. I hope that most of us will have many years ahead of us to prepare, but the reality of life is that we never know when the time will come for us to return from this life to the Lord.

So today, as we celebrate Mass as part of our Parish Festival weekend, we should take time to ask God to show us where we need to continue to prepare our spiritual lives for his arrival. God has given us many parish family members, friends and community to celebrate with us at our parish festival and to praise God for all of the blessings that he has given us. So let us enjoy each day of our lives with the people around us, and continue to grow in our relationship with God so that when he does come to call us, we can say that we are ready and well prepared to enter into the celebration of his presence and the treasure of eternal life.

God's Blessings---Deacon Jim