

The Pray More Advent Retreat

Inspiring talks to help you
prepare to celebrate the
birth of our Lord,
Jesus Christ



Waiting Well: Making the Most of Advent

by Johnnette Benkovic

“Waiting is not popular. In fact, most people consider waiting a waste of time.

Perhaps this is because the culture in which we live is basically saying, “Get going! Do something! Show you are able to make a difference! Don’t just sit there and wait!” For many people, waiting is an awful desert between where they are and where they want to go. And people do not like such a place... It impresses me, therefore, that all the figures which appear on the first pages of Luke’s Gospel are waiting. Zechariah and Elizabeth are waiting. Mary is waiting. Simeon and Anna, who were there at the temple when Jesus was brought in, are waiting. The whole opening scene of the Good News is filled with waiting people. And right at the beginning all those people in some way or another hear the words, “Do not be afraid, I have something good to say to you.” These words set the tone and the context.”

- Henri Nouwen

Reflective Questions

1. From its very beginnings, there has been an element of sacrifice that has been attached to Advent. How can you use this time of Advent to make sacrifices and to die to yourself?
2. The grace of God is always in the present moment. We tend to move too quickly into the future or head too far back into the past. How can you stay focused on the present moment throughout this season? What are some things that you think God wants you to do in the present moment, in this period of waiting?

3. Mary waited well; for Jesus' coming, for Jesus' ministry, and through his death. What can you learn from how she waited well? What can you do in your life that imitates how she waited?
4. Henri Nouwen wrote, "People who wait have received a promise that allows them to wait. They have received a promise that allows them to wait. They have received something that is a work in them, like a seed that has started to grow. This is very important. We can only really wait if what we are waiting for has already begun for us. So waiting is never a movement from nothing to something. It is always a movement from something to something more." What is it that God has planted as a seed within you? What is it that you are waiting for this season, and how can you water that seed in your time of waiting?
5. We cooperate with God and the grace He gives us in the present moment through prayer. How can you incorporate more prayer into your Advent season?
6. Prayer isn't just about speaking with our Lord. It's also about listening to Him. How do you listen to Him -- for Him? Have you given Him time to speak to You?