

Why God Asks Us to Wait *(Recommended to run during Advent)*

In our life with the Lord, there are times when Jesus draws us into periods of waiting. These times come about when we are faced with a great problem that we cannot solve, a great need that we cannot fill, or a big question that we cannot answer. When we find ourselves in these situations, we do everything we can to search, seek, and obtain the solutions. But then we reach the point where we discover that there is simply nothing else we can do. We go into a period of waiting, waiting on the Lord. Even though it often doesn't "feel" like it, Jesus brings us into these periods of waiting as an expression of his deep love for us. Periods of waiting are very precious to him because when we wait, we are acknowledging that we have no way to provide for ourselves and we become entirely dependent upon him. This posture of childlike dependence is very precious to God, who wants to be our provider in everything.

Frequently, however, times of waiting can be extremely difficult for us. We are taught since childhood that a valuable life is an active one, a life that is "doing" and producing. So when we journey into patches of waiting we can feel useless, uncomfortable, frustrated and insecure. But ironically, it is these periods of seeming "inactivity", that God himself is often doing the most powerful work of transformation in us. The reason for this is that in periods of waiting it is God himself who is the primary actor. When we relinquish power and control and surrender ourselves to waiting on the Lord, we are permitting him to act in us in ways that belong solely to his wisdom and love. A metaphor for this is the great mystery of pregnancy, where the development of an infinitely precious and unrepeatable human being is taking place in a manner almost entirely hidden to the eyes of the world. In this same way, any period of waiting, especially when we see little to nothing "happening", has the potential to become a period of dramatic new birth for each of us.

Advent is such a precious and fruitful time in the Church because it is a period of waiting. The decision of the Church to preface the birth of Christ with a period of waiting, silence and prayerful preparation show how deeply the Church understands the transformative power of waiting. When we wait for something we desire, our hearts grow. They stretch and change like the fresh wineskins in the Gospel that have to grow and stretch with the pouring in of new wine. In light of this, the most important thing we can do this Advent is to carve out time to experience this "waiting" through periods of silence, intentional inactivity, and contemplative preparation. Let us guard these moments of waiting jealously for Christ who wishes to use this period to bring about something new for us. Let us choose to enter that very uncomfortable place of "inactivity" and tell the Lord, "I trust in you", "I believe that you will act" "I know that you will bring about something new in me." ~*Meghan Cokeley, Office for the New Evangelization, Archdiocese of Philadelphia*