



A LESSON IN WAITING: AN ADVENT RETREAT

GETTING STARTED

Find a quiet, comfortable place to experience this retreat -- at home, outside, or at a local place of worship. Sit in stillness for a few moments. Try to gently quiet your mind. Listen to the sound of your breath.

Now settle into the moment:

- 🕯 Close your eyes and breathe deeply
- 🕯 Recognize that God is with you

PRAYER

God, you speak with a still, small voice. Quiet me so that I may hear your word within me. You ask us to wait and to watch for your coming. Lord, come! You make all things new. Give me patience to await your arrival and wisdom to know you are already here. Teach me to dwell in the mystery of “already but not yet.” Lord, come! The world longs for your presence.

Pray: The holiday season is full of waiting... waiting in line, waiting for flights, waiting for time spent with loved ones. Using your own words, offer a prayer for patience this Advent.

READING ([Psalm 27:13-14](#))

*I believe I shall see the LORD's goodness
in the land of the living.*

*Wait for the LORD, take courage;
be stouthearted, wait for the LORD!*

THOUGHTS ON THE READING

Advent is a season of preparation. We prepare our hearts, families, and homes to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child. It's also a season of waiting. We wait to celebrate this joyous feast. We wait and keep watch, just like the disciples, for His return. In the midst of this waiting, we are called to faith ... to cultivate confident assurance in the One whose coming we anticipate. We are called to hope ... to look with joy for the fulfillment of the promises of God. We are called to love ... to give to others from the superabundance God sows in the hearts of those who love him.

Our preparations for Christmas often overwhelm us with occasions for waiting. We wait in line at stores. We wait in crowded bus stations, train stations, airport terminals, and highway lanes as we travel. We wait for Christmas bonuses, travelling relatives, the mail carrier, the cookies in the oven to finish baking, and Santa. Waiting is not, however, a passive action. Waiting is an opportunity to grow in faith, hope, and love. Advent is a lesson in waiting ... dynamic waiting ... transformative waiting.



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REFLECTING ON THE READING

Read the words of the psalmist again. Why does waiting for the Lord require courage? What does it mean for us to assert that we shall see God's goodness in a world so fraught with violence? In what ways is God asking you to wait this Advent?

PRAYING FOR THE COMMUNITY

Loving God, you are the One who is, was, and is to come. We wait for you. Your promises are trustworthy and your love never fails. We give you thanks for times of preparation and waiting. Let faith, hope, and love take root in the hearts of your people this Advent. Make us bear fruit that brings peace and joy to your world. We offer you all of our waiting. We offer you all those who wait. Bless those who wait to be home with their families. Bless those who wait to hear about new jobs. Bless those who wait to be born and those who wait to give birth. Bless those who wait for test results. Bless those who wait for an answer to prayer. Bless those who wait for freedom. Bless those who wait for justice. Bless those who wait for the grace to overcome addiction. Bless those who wait to be welcomed home into your loving kingdom. Come, Lord! We wait for you. Amen.

CONCLUSION

The Aramaic expression "Maran atha," used both by St. Paul and St. John in the New Testament, means: "Come, Lord." As you prepare to end this retreat, quietly repeat these words to yourself. Take refuge in this expression any time you find yourself overwhelmed by waiting this Advent. Let these words be your prayer. Ask God to make your waiting fruitful and to help you grow in the virtues of faith, hope, and love.