

1st SUN. in ADVENT (B-3) (6:00 Sat. & Sun) **What are we waiting for?**

Is. 64:1-9; 1Cor 1:3-9; Mk. 13:32-37

Think about the expression: What are we waiting for? An advantage of speaking a language other than English is the translation of an expression can lead to a new meaning for it. For example, the verb “to wait for” in Spanish is the same word as the verb “to hope.” Hence, “What are we waiting for?” can also mean “What are we hoping for?”

So let us think of Advent, a time of waiting, a verb which, to an American, can be filled with impatience, as a time of hoping for, a verb filled with anticipation. If we look at the Jews, they are still waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the redeemer who is to lead them to the promised land. We, with anticipation and hope, are waiting for Christ’s 2nd coming, one that will, as we saw last week, separate the sheep from the goats, and take us hopeful sheep to God’s promised kingdom.

Our Jewish brothers and sisters are still waiting patiently or not so patiently for the promised Messiah. We are still waiting for, hoping with anticipation, the coming of Christ, who will take us to himself. We who know he has already come, change the verb “to wait” to one of “hoping for with anticipation.” This consoles me and transforms how I live.

Why? Because our Messiah has already come and shown us about where we’re hoping to end up! He has shown us how to get there, too. All we need do is to be messiahs for each other. In other words, all we need do is to proclaim the Good News of Emmanuel, “God with us.” If we truly live as if God were already with us, then why live impatiently, why live with anxiety, why live in fear? Fear, anxiety and impatience are not of God, and should not be in a Christian’s experience.

Like Isaiah, I live hoping that when the Lord comes, he finds us living as he would want us to live: loving God above all else and loving each other as we are loved by the God we love.

One reason I so harp on our Mission Statement is that all we have to realize and to do is contained in it: To discover God's love is to show hope in search of it. And in knowing that God's love is found in the way we worship, the way we pray, the way we study about God and how God acts in the world, and the way we do Good Works, that is, serve each other, we can only be hopeful and never anxious, anticipating and never impatient. It is the contrast between Martha and Mary in the Gospels.

And so we begin the Season of Advent, of hopeful waiting for our Messiah's 2nd Coming. Would that what he left behind is already a part of our way of proceeding, our way of living! As Jesus said to Martha, "don't be anxious about what you are to do," do only what's needed, the better part: sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn from him, who is meek and humble of heart. Then, go out to the world and apply what is learned.

Advent is also a time to take stock of our past life. It is a time to look at what needs redeeming, what needs to be left behind for always, and a time to embrace new ways of being. In other words, it is a time to let ourselves be born again in Jesus, who longs to see our hearts become mangers of his presence.

Would that Christ finds our hearts filled with babies born into poverty as he was, compassionately cared for us! Who might be found in those mangers? Perhaps those without a home! Perhaps those who go to bed hungry every night! Perhaps those who live in fear of being deported from their adopted nation! Perhaps elders abandoned or abused by their children! Perhaps kids abused or abandoned by their parents! Perhaps our kids who aren't receiving a good education! Perhaps those victimized by prejudice ending up in the new lucrative prison industry. Pick one and make it your mission to address it, and "would that Christ find us doing it!" For in doing it, Christ is born to the world. "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel has come to thee oh Israel."