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ADVENT DEVOTIONS
for CATHOLIC SENIORS

Introduction

Advent, the Church's formal call for each of us to pay attention, be deliberate and get ready for the birth of our savior. Advent provides structure.

So much is said about how busy we are at this time of year. Subsequently, we are invariably encouraged to slow down, to busy ourselves a bit less. However, as you hold this little spiritual gem in your hands, excited about growing closer to the Lord with each page you turn, I'd like you to consider this: that being busy isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, I'd encourage you to stay busy throughout this Advent season.

If you think that you're too busy to regularly pray, to talk to others about what Advent really means or to reflect on Scripture, take a closer look at what else is keeping you occupied. Being busy with things that don't enrich our faith ultimately distances us from God.

Let's be sure to be busy this Advent—busy making preparations that will enable us to better welcome—and rest in—the presence of the Lord at Christmastime.

TERENCE HEGARTY, *editor*

Suddenly, It's Advent

Salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers. ROMANS 13:11

This Advent we are one year closer to Christ's second Advent, when he returns to welcome us home to heaven. It is Christ who comes at Advent, but his coming is not restricted to a certain season. For example, a couple brings food to a hungry family at Thanksgiving. For this family, it is suddenly Advent. Christ's love has come in the gift of food. Parents pray in the doctor's office. The doctor tells them that their child's tumor is not malignant and can be cured. It was Advent. An aged husband finally breathed his last. He skipped Christmas, Epiphany and Lent. For him, it was Easter. His next Advent would be Christ's second coming.

So in this Advent season, and in every season, God's people rejoice. We welcome Christ and reach out to others with his love. For them, it will suddenly be Advent.

Lord, fashion me to be a caring person who reaches out to bring your hope to people. Amen.

GIVE: Do something special for someone.

READ: Romans 8:28-39

The Saving Work

It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved. PSALM 127:2

On some days, when I am tired, it seems as though all the joy I used to receive from the Advent season is gone. So many cherished traditions have changed or have come and gone. Even the work of the season that was once mine has passed on to other hands, and yet, I still want to do more.

In these moods, I have difficulty accepting my dissipated moments—moments when I don't know how to serve, moments when my mind is clouded to the wisdom of Scripture, when I read but do not understand, when I work but to seemingly no effect.

I forget, sometimes, that the most important work in all of Christendom is God's coming to us.

Lord, in darkest night in a faraway town, you sent a little child into the world in order to save it. Help me feel grateful for your blessings, which I've done nothing to earn. Amen.

REFLECT: Let God show you what he can do when you surrender the saving work to him.

READ: Revelation 21:3-4

Waiting for a Promise

We wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. TITUS 2:13

In 1969, Irish playwright Samuel Beckett won the Nobel Prize for Literature, and the title of his play *Waiting for Godot* became a catch phrase. The play ended with Godot not coming.

During Advent, we also wait. Our waiting, however, is for the fulfillment of a promise, God's promise of a messiah. After 400 years without a prophet, Israel was still waiting, and God did not fail them nor us. Though many then and now can't find the answer, we know that the promise was fulfilled in a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes. Let us not forget, as we wait to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child, that only God keeps promises perfectly. That knowledge far surpasses earthly expectations and gifts under the tree. Only one promise, one waiting, has a sure ending.

Thank you, Lord, for your promise of the Christ who came for us. Amen.

DIG DEEP: Find joy in waiting, and know that God is able to keep his promise.

READ: Romans 8:22-25; Psalm 27:11-14

Expectant Waiting

*...This is the LORD for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. ISAIAH 25:9*

When I was very young, my mother took a picture of me standing on my tiptoes, looking out our screen door. She took the photo after my grandmother told me, “Jesus is coming.” With the trust of a child, I stood eagerly at the door so I could see him when he started walking down the street.

That eager, expectant waiting for our Lord is what Advent is all about for me.

Waits in doctor’s offices, grocery store lines and other places are sometimes challenging. But I can always use those times as opportunities to pray, read Scripture or simply to be in the presence of the Lord. The choice is up to me.

Lord, during this season, and always, help me to wait expectantly for you. Help me to live in the light of your mercy. Amen.

ASK: How can I use this Advent, and other wait times, to prepare to meet the Lord?

READ: Galatians 5:5

Jennifer Cromie

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What's in Your Waiting?

[Jesus] ordered them...to wait there for the promise of the Father. ACTS 1:4-5

There are all kinds of waiting. Waiting in traffic. Waiting in line at the DMV. Waiting for results of a biopsy. What's the result? Frustration, restlessness and sometimes dread. Then there's waiting at the airport to greet a loved one. Waiting for a grandchild to be born. Waiting to open the presents under the tree. Can't you just feel the joy, hope and expectation?

Which type of waiting fills your Advent? Do you let the hassles of the season fill you with dread, or the promises of the season fill you with joy? As children of the heavenly Father, our waiting can be tinged with hope and expectation because of his promise of eternity for all who believe in his son as Savior. Isn't that a better way to wait?

Gracious Father, fill us with your Holy Spirit as we wait in anticipation for the return of Jesus, your son, our Savior. Amen.

REFLECT: Use your times of waiting to reflect upon the promises of the Father.

READ: Lamentations 3:22-26; 2 Peter 3:14-18

Jane Wilke

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An Important Question

He proclaimed, “the one who is more powerful than I is coming after me.” **MARK 1:7**

The people hearing John’s proclamation might have wondered who this person would be or what he would do. Of course, we already know! But a good Advent preparation for Christmas challenges us with an important question. What does Jesus really mean to us today? Asking the question with a loving faith can help us find a deeply personal answer that will amaze us. Then the question becomes a beautiful occasion of God’s grace. It helps us not only to remember the many blessings we sometimes forget, but also to recall how often we’ve been guided when we’ve felt weak or confused. Jesus has touched our lives in many different ways. When we reflect on this, we see how deeply we are loved.

Lord, may I see more clearly that you have always walked with me, both in my joys and in my sorrows. Amen.

REFLECTION: Silent prayer helps us to deepen our awareness of Jesus’ meaning in our life. How might this affect your life?

READ: John 14:18; John 15:4-5

Advent Humility

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...

PHILIPPIANS 2:5

Jesus did not consider his equality with God something to be held onto at all costs. He took on himself human form and shouldered the cost of our sin, humbling himself to take on our death for us. We are used to these words introducing a lesson for the season of Lent, but they are Advent words as well.

Humble Mary gave birth to humble Jesus. “Let it be to me according to your word” she told the angel (Luke 1:38). God himself came in humility. Now that is a contradiction in terms! But it is true nonetheless. The Advent message reminds us of Micah’s ancient words: “Walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). See how much God loves you! He walks with you as Immanuel. After all these years, we are still filled with wonder. We see; we believe; we adore him. Yes, we walk with him.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your wondrous Advent journey to me. Amen.

WALK: Take a walk today and remember that the Lord walks with you.

READ: Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 1:46-55

Don Schatz
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Rejoice each day of Advent as you “follow the star” that leads to Baby Jesus this Advent season!

Featuring an inspiring, joy-filled reflection for each day of Advent written especially for Catholic seniors, readers are gently encouraged to focus on the importance of the Christmas season that is to come.

With reflections, Scripture, prompts for ways to bring the joy of the season to those around you and prayer, *Follow the Star* is the perfect companion, allowing you to prepare a place in your heart for Jesus, our newborn savior!



This book, along with many other *Creative Communications for the Parish* products, is available on [amazonkindle](#) and [nook](#).

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