

## Advent 2020: Week 1 Waiting with Creation

God's "Advent", that is his "coming to be with us" (*ad-venio*), happens in many ways and at many levels. One way is through the unfolding of creation, which Scripture sees as a process of growing manifestation of the glory of God and simultaneously of our own true identity.

We should think of creation, and our own body within it, not as a work completed in an initial and self-contained act, but rather as a trajectory, a process, something that will become what was meant to be only at the end, when God will be all in all (1 Cor 15.28). If we listen intently and pay attention, we will discover that we are caught in the "eager longing" and "groaning" of the creative process, we are part of a universal gestation: "for we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pain of childbirth until now" (Rm 8.19-22).

*An excerpt from Luigi Gioia's talk*



### Advent landscape

Each day this week, make time for a walk through this Advent landscape. The last leaves are falling. The open frameworks of trees are stark and clear against the low winter light. The skies are wide. What was once hidden is now revealed.

Allow the Advent landscape to be in dialogue with your own inner 'soulcape'. Let go your preoccupations as you walk. Be alive to what is around you and the simple rhythm of your walking. Pause now and then to be attentive to what is before you. Be as open as the land. Allow the upturned bare tree branches to echo your own longing for God.



Our vocation is not simply to be, but to work together with God in the creation of our own life, our own identity, our own destiny...we can evade this responsibility by playing with masks...It is quite easy; it seems to please everyone. But in the long run the cost and the sorrow comes very high.

Thomas Merton: *Seeds of Contemplation*

### What are you waiting for?

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. [James 5.7-8]

### *What are you waiting for?*

An answer? A sense of direction? Healing? The next step in your journey? A felt sense of God with you?

### *What do you long for?*

It may be too deep for words. Let your body express your prayer...opening your hands, bowing down to the ground, or reaching up to the sky.

### *What does God long to give you?*

Open your hands. Open your heart. This waiting is the meeting place of your longing and God's generous giving.



I will make Ephraim break the ground;  
Judah must plough;  
Jacob must harrow for himself.  
Sow for yourselves righteousness;  
reap steadfast love;  
break up your fallow ground;

for it is time to seek the LORD,  
that he may come and rain righteousness  
upon you. [Hosea 10.11-12]

### **Developing contemplative awareness.**

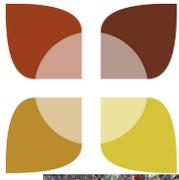
When we contemplate we allow ourselves to be absorbed in the other. We lose ourselves in listening to music, gazing at a painting, watching a child at play or being held in wonder at the changing colours of the sky at sunset. For that moment we begin to let go of our own concerns, agendas and needs, and become open to receive what the 'other' is and what the other might gift us with.

Openness to the Spirit flows from a contemplative stance to life: we become open to who the Other is, what the Other does, what the Other says and how this Other invites us to respond. This 'Other' is God, who is expressed in all that is.

It doesn't have to be  
the blue iris, it could be  
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few  
small stones; just  
pay attention, then patch  
a few words together and don't try  
to make them elaborate, this isn't  
a contest but the doorway  
into thanks, and a silence in which  
another voice may speak.

From: 'Prayer' from *Thirst: Poems* by  
Mary Oliver

**Some scripture readings for prayer and reflection:** Isaiah 64.1-8; Mark 13.28-37; Romans 8.18-27; Psalm 130; Luke 12.22-34



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