

AUDIO RETREAT

Advent Retreat 2022 | Week Three | Waiting

I wait for the Lord;
my soul waits.
and in his word I hope.
My soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.
Psalm 130

Waiting is an expression of relationship: the halting of our desire to control, grab or manipulate, so as to make a respectful, humble space for the other. A good listener knows she must wait...not fill in the gaps... allow the silences that in their time give birth to words. Waiting is the art of attention. The one willing to wait with attention provides a rare place of shelter.

Prayer is a form of waiting – not our filling the space the words, but the holding of our attention towards God. An open door allows the other to come in; relationship deepens, transformation takes place.



The Visitation by Claudia Williams

As a focal point for your time of prayer use an empty bowl or your own cupped hands.

Praying

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: *Thirst: Poems* by Mary Oliver

Waiting has the capacity to steady our focus and sharpen our attention. Waiting deepens longing: waiting for what will only come in its time.

Waiting can be joyful and expectant; waiting can be painful; and looking more deeply into the rhythm of days, waiting *belongs* within our experience. We sometimes meet it as interruption to our agendas, but waiting is relational space, pregnant space, space where words that have been too deep to utter come to be.

The short days, lack of light and the loss of form we experience in this season of year may make us more aware of what is unresolved in our life: the question which as yet has no answer, the undefined, not wholly understood longings of the heart, the experience from which we are still reeling. In a world of speed our lack of answer or absence of resolution comes hard. Advent encourages us to hold our nerve: to seek, yet be willing to wait for what only time and gift can bring. Advent schools us in moving from anxious and frenetic activity to the stillness of attention and receptivity.

Contemplation is nothing but a hidden, peaceful, loving inflow of God.
If it is given room,
it will inflame the spirit with love.
John of the Cross, *The Dark Night* 1.10.6

My spirit has become dry because it forgets to feed on you
[John of the Cross, Sayings 39]

Servant Lord, I offer my day to you.
It is your gift to me.

Draw me to yourself.
Help me to be awake to your presence
And let your Spirit grow in me.
For this is my desire.
Help me this day to hear your call
and to work with you.
Let love, not fear, inspire me.
But let me trust you enough
to let go and rest in what you are doing
when the work belongs solely to you.

Some Bible readings for reflection and prayer:

Isaiah 30.15-26	The Lord waits to be gracious to you;
Hosea 10.12	It is time to seek the Lord
Hosea 6.1-3	He will come to us like the showers that water the earth