

# FAITH AND REASON

**To Wait is to Hope:** The ancient Greeks had two words for time: Kronos - man's time... Kairos - God's time. This distinction clearly indicates the importance, indeed, the necessity of waiting. God's eternal plan is unfolding in time - in God's time. This is precisely why waiting is one of the unwritten laws of life. So many speak of "just waiting" as if to suggest that waiting means doing nothing. Waiting, if correctly understood, can be a most positive force in our lives.

There is waiting that has a special point to it, i.e., waiting for the fulfilment of a process that has already begun. The gardener, as he plants the seeds, knows that a period of time is required for the seeds to ripen for the plants to grow and for the flowers to bloom. The philosopher, the writer, the artist, do not resent waiting because they know that a deeper insight, a new idea, a new form is evolving. The mother, awaiting the birth of her child knows that her time of waiting is not wasted; she knows that the child in her womb is growing and coming ever closer to the moment of birth. Parents ask - and if they do not they should - "What child is this" "What will this child be" ... and for the answer they too must wait.

The people of Israel knew all these thoughts and emotions during those long years under Babylonian domination, Persian domination, Greek domination, Roman domination. They yearned, they prayed.... they waited for the coming of the Savior. Only gradually did the form in which God would reveal himself take shape. Only gradually did their expectation of a Messiah - a national hero - give way to the expectation of a universal liberator for all peoples.... Emmanuel.

Their waiting -- though very long and most difficult -- was nevertheless a creative waiting. The stage was being set for God to make his entrance. The people were given the time to grow in their faith and accept the Messiah succession. The salient fact in all of this is that it is never simply a matter of waiting.

We may consider the prospect of waiting in the abstract. But waiting is always in the concrete. And it is the concrete circumstances of life that make waiting difficult. The inability to see any light at the end of the tunnel the stress of wondering where present decisions and actions will succeed or not, the challenge of recognizing the seeds of change where one never expected to find them and change course to promote the growth of such seeds, the challenge of resisting the "why me" "why here" "why now" mentality.

Our's is a creative waiting. Creating waiting is of its nature demanding. It requires faith in oneself, faith in God and in his eternal plan as it unfolds. Viewed in the context of the New Testament, creative waiting is, the seed falling to the earth and dying that it may bear fruit, the weak being chosen to confound the strong, the foolish being chosen to confound the wise, the power of God manifest in our weakness, the folly of the Cross leading to glory and resurrection.

In every age there are countless souls in our world who are truly good. I would like to tell you about one of them who, in her own life embodies the challenging implications of today's homily. Her life is truly an inspiration. And this is so, not because of the so-called "Indomitable human spirit", which in fact is nothing of the kind without the grace of God. The forces of this world can crush anything that is simply human. This soul's childhood was shadowed with extreme poverty, but she wanted to become a singer. She struggled through years of study and training only to be told that she would never make a career as a singer. She married, but her husband who was a wastrel, left her with three children and a pile of debts, which she tried to pay off until the struggle became too much for her. Living at starvation level she became ill and, almost demented with worry and despair, she decided to kill her children and commit suicide herself. Only the heartfelt pleading of her eldest child prevented her from doing so.

This was her darkest hour, but the dawn was coming, and when it came it was a wonderful dawn. A few years later she was a world-famous singer, with the Opera Houses of New York, London, Berlin, competing for her favors. Success grew out of failure. She herself declared that the tragedies of her life had enriched her singing. A mysterious quality, a blending of understanding and tenderness, which thrilled and captivated the hearts of millions.

Those who are willing to wait, believe in the future, in God's future. This faith is pure and simple; Lord I believe in your management of my life. And from this willingness to wait, from this faith, hope will emerge, an enduring hope. Without this genuine hope, what is to become of us? **A Meditation by Fr. William C. Mooney**

**Canticle of the Turning v. 1-3:** Mighty God, we rejoice with all who hunger, for your Son Jesus, whose coming we proclaim, spreads a table of blessing before us and feeds us with his very presence. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this meal, that we might be united with Jesus Christ, and with all who magnify his name. Sustain us with your presence and keep us faithful to the end, singing with joy and confidence:

## **Prayers for Lighting the Advent Wreath Candles: Third Week**

Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**Advent Prayer:** Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas. We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us. We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!" Amen... **Henri J.M. Nouwen**

**Will we let ourselves become a Church** that calls and welcomes sinners with open arms, that gives courage and hope, or are we a Church closed in on herself? Are we a Church where the love of God dwells, where one cares for the other, where one prays for the other? A final question: what can I, a weak fragile sinner, do? God says to you, Do not be afraid of holiness; do not be afraid to aim high, to let yourself be loved and purified by God; do not be afraid to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit. Let us be infected by the holiness of God. Every Christian is called to sanctity...; and sanctity does not consist especially in doing extraordinary things, but in allowing God to act. It is the meeting of our weakness with the strength of his grace, it is saving faith in his action that allows us to live in charity, to do everything with joy and humility, for the glory of God and as a service to our neighbor... **Pope Francis**

#### **A Thought For the Day**

<b>Sunday</b>	God made us for joy. God is joy, and the joy of living reflects the original joy that God felt in creating us.
<b>Monday</b>	Joy, with peace, is the sister of charity. Serve the Lord with laughter.
<b>Tuesday</b>	But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.
<b>Wednesday</b>	To get the full value of joy you must have someone to divide it with.
<b>Thursday</b>	Christianity spreads through the joy of disciples who know that they are loved and saved.
<b>Friday</b>	A person finds joy in giving an apt reply— and how good is a timely word!
<b>Saturday</b>	If we live the faith in our daily life, then our work too becomes a chance to spread the joy of being a Christian.

**The Holy Spirit gives us joy.** And he is joy. Joy is the gift in which all the other gifts are included. It is the expression of happiness, of being in harmony with ourselves, that which can only come from being in harmony with God and with his creation. It belongs to the nature of joy to be radiant; it must communicate itself. The missionary spirit of the Church is none other than the impulse to communicate the joy which has been given...**Pope Benedict XVI**

**Joy is the Christians' breath:** It is "joy that Christian's breath", Pope Francis said. Christians express themselves joyfully. Joy cannot be purchased or forced. "No", the Pope said, "it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. The one who puts joy in our hearts is the Holy Spirit".

**Joy, fed by memory, generates hope and peace:** Memory is the solid rock on which the Christian finds joy. Remembering "what the Lord has done for us...regenerates us", the Pope continued. That memory generates hope for what is to come in the future when we will meet the Son of God. Memory and hope allow Christians to live joyfully, and peace is joy lived to its perfection:

*Joy does not mean living from laugh to laugh. No, it's not that. Joy is not entertainment. No, it's not that. It is something else. Christian joy is peace, peace that is deeply rooted, peace in the heart, the peace that only God can give. This is Christian joy. It is not easy to foster this joy.*

**Joy endures:** Pope Francis lamented the fact that today's culture contents itself with fragments of pleasure that never satisfy completely. Since joy is a gift of the Spirit, it vibrates even "in turbulent moments and in the moment of trial".

*There is a healthy restlessness, and there is another which is not healthy – that which seeks security above all, which seeks pleasure above all. The young man in the Gospel was afraid that if he gave up his wealth he would not be happy. Joy, consolation: this is our breath as Christians...* Referring to the passage from the Gospel of Mark, **Pope Francis**

**In His Will is Our Peace**  
**Fr. William C. Mooney**

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