

## A TIME OF WAITING

Waiting is a prayerful action. It is an expression of hope, that someone will eventually come. It is an exercise of patience, where the soul extends itself to the great possibility to simply let the plan unfold without having to force the arrival of the one who is to come. Waiting is an act of faith, that the one will indeed arrive. It is a disposition of holy longing, which intensifies according to how much the one coming is needed or loved. Advent is a time of waiting in prayer, hope, patience, faith, and holy longing.

As the Church begins a new liturgical year, we put on the garb of waiting for the coming of the Lord, both for His Coming in glory at the end of time, and for the glorious season of Christmas, the festival that celebrates the birth of Jesus. These twofold waiting gives us a sense of purpose that we do need our Savior, that we badly need him to set the world aright.

My dear church, I again encourage you to take this short four weeks of Advent seriously. There are many special ways to observe this season of waiting. Allow me to name some here:

1. Increase your prayer time by adding some devotionals or reflections.
2. Allot some moments of silence as part of your daily routine, to be aware of the spirit of the season. Do this even in the midst of physical noise.
3. Listen to some beautiful music that are unique to the season of waiting. Fill the air with the sounds of meditative music or songs of longing.
4. Reach out to a friend or family who is struggling. Let them know of your prayers. Assure them that you are thinking of them and that you care about them. Extend your peace, especially if you have some severed relationships with family or friends.
5. Go to the sacrament of reconciliation. Confessions for the deanery will be available here at Mary Queen on December 16, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Take advantage of the opportunity to find renewal and grace in the sacrament of reconciliation. Healing of mind and body begins with forgiveness of sins.
6. Read from our advent resource for daily reflections. There are many other that you can find online, but if you have our own handy daily advent thoughts to ponder, get one and use it well, and even share it with other friends and family.
7. Keep your Christmas plans simple and implement lifestyle adjustments that will make Christmas less materialistic and more spiritual. This all begins in the Advent Season, as we prepare for Christmas.
8. Do an act of charity. Our church has concrete options to reach out to the marginalized members of the community.
9. Go to mass. There is no better way to prepare for the coming of Jesus than availing His divine presence in the Holy Eucharist.
10. Smile and be a cheerful presence to others. Do not wait in gloom but wait in joy for the Lord is near!

Whatever you do during Advent, know that you are accompanied by my prayers and the prayers of our parish family. Have a blessed season of waiting.

With holy expectations,  
Fr. Sunny Castillo