

## Advent

*Written by Mrs. Ramey Badeaux*

As we enter into this holiday season anticipating good food, shopping, gift giving, and gatherings, it can be easy to underemphasize the significance of the season of Advent, which in Latin means “coming”. The definition of the word “advent” is *the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event*. As I reflect on what Advent means in my life, I can’t help but recall the many times I have found myself waiting for something to arrive.

Eight rose bushes line the cypress fence in the front of my house. For several years, through the changing seasons, I have pruned and watched the roses go in and out of bloom. Last Saturday, I stood in my front yard with a cup of coffee staring at my overgrown garden, debating if I should pull the rose bushes out all together. I thought it would be simpler to replace them with something easier to care for. I found myself impatiently waiting for the roses to bloom again and I wanted something pretty to look at in the present moment. While I love to work in my garden, I didn’t enjoy the thorns that stuck in my hands each time I pruned. After going back and forth in my mind, I finally decided to keep the rose bushes and continue to care for them. I thought about how beautiful they are when in bloom and all the ways they have brought me joy. After deeper reflection, I came to the realization that the beautiful roses were worth waiting for, as is God’s greater plan for our lives. Similar to the rose bushes, our faith teaches us that throughout life we will experience periods of pruning, enduring thorns, impatiently waiting for the next bloom, and even moments when our lives appear less than beautiful. While waiting can be difficult and test our patience, we are called to trust that these times are necessary to reveal the plan Christ is lovingly cultivating within us. While it can be easier said than done, we are called to surrender our plans to God, die a little to our own desires, and give Him the space to work on something in us that will bloom in time. We are called to patiently wait.

One of my most challenging tests of waiting came in 2008. A year after our first son was born, my husband and I suffered a miscarriage. We were heartbroken. For two years following the miscarriage, we tried to conceive without success. Not being able to control something we desired so deeply was frustrating and discouraging. The fears crept in that we would never be able to see our dreams of a big family realized, when my husband gently and lovingly reminded me that this was all part of God’s plan and we needed to embrace whatever His plan was for our family. I needed to be reminded of this truth, and the words needed to come from him. My husband told me what I already knew in my heart. So we continued to pray, we surrendered our plan to Him, we found peace trusting that God knew what was best, and we continued to wait. One morning, while praying at the Carlemlite Monastery, I had an overwhelming feeling that I was pregnant. My feeling was right and by the grace of God in October of 2010, our second child was born. In the coming years, two more children followed. Christ had a plan all along and it was worth the wait.

So often, we find ourselves waiting. Maybe it's waiting in line at Chick-Fil-A or for our roses to bloom, but maybe it's more significant, like waiting for our dreams to become a reality or for an answer to our prayers. Waiting can cause us to grow impatient, frustrated, doubtful, or sometimes even hopeless. What I have learned through waiting is that it's necessary. In waiting, we have an opportunity to draw near to Christ and experience the **peace, joy, hope, and love** that can come only from His grace and letting His will be done.

What area of your life are you growing impatient? What are you waiting for?

Trust Jesus and pray that your desires align with His will. Just as we joyfully await the arrival of our savior in the form of a beautiful infant, we joyfully await for God to cultivate something more beautiful than we can begin to imagine in our lives, knowing that His plans for us are always greater than our own.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6