

Advent: the Delight of Being with Jesus

BY JOAN PATTEN



This year, 2020, has felt like ten years of history have been crammed into it. We hear people saying they can't wait for 2020 to be over. Nothing has gone as planned, everything is being cancelled, and we don't know when life will be back to "normal". We find ourselves waiting for 2020 to be over. Waiting is often experienced as a period of time between two events. During that "pause of time" we either wait for the next thing to happen, for someone to do something, for God to do something, or we try to make something happen ourselves. We don't like to feel the uncertainty, anxiety, and pain of waiting and our desire for instant gratification and control highlights our belief that the experience of waiting is something to overcome.

The season of Advent proposes a different understanding of waiting. In fact, the Church defines Advent as a "period of devout and expectant delight". Through the Advent readings, prayers, and traditions, we recall with gratitude the moment in history in which Jesus came among us. We are also invited to exercise our hopeful expectation of His Second Coming at the end of time, praying "*Come, Lord Jesus!*" These two comings of the Lord help us notice how Jesus is with us in this present moment in time. This attentive noticing of His presence and activity is the cause of our delight.

However, "delightful" has not been a common word to describe the year 2020, and yet, this is what is being offered to us. Delight is finding Another, *Emmanuel, God with us*. We are not alone in our waiting, in our suffering, and in our fears. Jesus, who is God, became a human being and entered into every human experience in order to redeem us and unite us to God. If we take some time this Advent to pause, wait, notice, and receive, we will be astonished to find Jesus who is waiting for us and desiring that we know *how* He is with us, pouring out His love and grace upon us.

God's love is concrete, personal, and not hidden from our awareness. He reveals His love in the daily realities of our lives. As you pray "*Come, Lord Jesus*" during this Advent season, consider making your own litany to invite Jesus into everything and let Him reveal how He is with you and what He is offering to you. We will still have many experiences of waiting in our lives, but as we grow closer to God, we will recognize these are moments to be with Him.

*Come, Lord Jesus...into my expectations
for the future*

*Come, Lord Jesus...into my anger and
disappointments*

*Come, Lord Jesus...into my fears and
anxieties*

*Come, Lord Jesus...into my darkness and
confusion*

*Come, Lord Jesus...into my families'
difficulties and suffering*

*Come, Lord Jesus...into my doubts and
helplessness*

*Come, Lord Jesus...into my sins and wounds
Come, Lord Jesus...into my finances and
responsibilities*

*Come, Lord Jesus...into my joys and gratitude
Come, Lord Jesus...into my hopes and dreams
Come, Lord Jesus...into my loneliness and
poverty*

*Come, Lord Jesus...into this moment and time
of waiting*

*Come, Lord Jesus...into my relationships
Come, Lord Jesus...into my past, present, future
Come, Lord Jesus...into my life and heart
(add your own)*