

Waiting

Waiting. At times there seems to be nothing worse. We wait for the results of medical tests. This can be the most excruciating kind of waiting. Our lives seem “on hold” as we wait and wait and wait for some news. We wait for the elevator, in the checkout line in the supermarket. We wait for the birth of a child, or grandchild. Nine months can seem an eternity. We wait endlessly for this pandemic to be over, or get through it somehow, so that we can get back some sense of balance and harmony, some easing of the dis-ease of waiting.

Painful and nerve-racking as it can be, waiting is the soil in which hope is born. Waiting is a wide open space of longing, of anticipating, of expecting. And it is when we long and anticipate that hope may be born in us. The American poet Emily Dickenson describes hope as:

*The thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the song without the words
And never stops at all.*

She is describing something very deep in us: A light, wordless longing of the human heart that dwells in the depths of every human being. Without it we cannot take the next step, let alone fly free!

The readings of all four Sundays of Advent draw our eye and ear to something aborning, something yet to be. The disciple of Jesus Christ lives in hope. We hope in his word, in his promise of new and enduring life. We stake our lives on the hope that the power of love will one day prevail over all evil. We try to live this hope day in and day out, week by week, season by season. But Advent is the unique moment for Christians to look more deeply into the reason for our hope, and to discover – perhaps for the first time – the deepest hope we hold.

What are you waiting for?

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