

Waiting

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus."

Luke 1: 30-31

It seems like I've spent my whole life waiting. When I was a kid, I impatiently waited for my birthday and then Christmas. When I was in high school, I couldn't wait to be in college, and then once in college I couldn't wait to graduate and get on with life. I couldn't wait to get married, then I couldn't wait to get a job and to become a mom.

There have also been times I've waited with dread. I nervously waited for my turn to play in the piano recital. I waited to find out if I made the team. I waited for test results to see if our unborn baby would be okay. I waited for a storm to pass to see how bad flooding would be. I waited to spend just a little more time with my granddad before he died.

And then there were those moments that defied expectations. Those times when life knocked my feet out from under me. The time I rear ended a school bus. The job that was cut with no warning. The hug or sweet words from my daughter out of the blue.

I can't help but think about Jesus' mother Mary and all of the waiting that she did. I imagine her impatiently waiting to meet her future husband and then preparing to be married. Having her feet knocked out from under her when an angel said she'd be a mom; but knowing that the timing was all wrong. The dread of waiting to have a conversation with Joseph to decide what to do next, because neither of them had any idea.

The fear of telling their families that Mary was expecting a baby. The excitement of watching Mary's belly grow and the waiting to meet their new son. And the dread of traveling so close to the baby's due date with the uncertainty of looking for a place to deliver when the inns were full.

But in the end, all the surprises, all the hope, all the fear, and all the unknown were worth it to meet the Messiah in all his tiny glory. I can almost see Mary's face full of wonder when the waiting was over, and she held Christ for the first time.

We've had quite a few surprises this year. The unexpected quarantine. The dread of watching people get sick and perhaps even die. The joy in connecting with family and friends in ways we never have before. Just like Mary held tightly to her new family even when the path was uncertain, let's hold tightly to the knowledge that this Advent season and every day to follow is accompanied by the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is with us through the good, the bad, and the ugly. And there's absolutely no waiting required.

Prayer: *Dear Jesus, give us the nudge of your presence throughout this Advent season. Remind us as we wait to celebrate your birthday, that you are always with us. Whether circumstances are joyous or somber, longed for or unexpected, you are with us in any situation. Amen.*