



What's What

A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.

Waiting In Joyful Hope

Think about the following situations that involve waiting and choose between options *a* or *b*:

Which is harder to wait for?

- a) a vacation or holiday weekend to begin
- b) a major project at work to be finished

Which is more frustrating?

- a) being stuck in traffic on your way to your vacation
- b) being stuck in traffic on your way home from vacation

Which one do you look forward to more?

- a) your birthday
- b) Christmas

We live in a culture that expects immediate results. We don't like to wait in line for anything. It frustrates us to think of waiting at the DMV, in traffic, for downloads or in check-out lines at stores.

As Catholics we also spend our time waiting—we are

waiting for the return of Jesus in glory. During Advent our sense of waiting is heightened because we are not only waiting for Jesus to return but also our remembrance of his arrival into our world 2,000 years ago.

It is easy to become overwhelmed with the demands we put on ourselves at this time of year. This results in our waiting for Jesus in a state of anxiety, or cynicism, or indifference. In this busyness of this season we need to take our cue from the prayer the presider prays at each Sunday Liturgy after the Our Father, "...keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ." We should focus on welcoming Jesus into our homes and hearts, full of hope and joy. Just as if we were preparing to welcome a family member

home from a long journey—we clean the house, prepare their favorite foods, and grow more and more excited as the time for their arrival draws near. This is the kind of waiting the church intends for us to do.

The Advent Scripture readings help us to more fully understand the concept of waiting in joyful hope. We hear of Isaiah and John the Baptist who have stern hope; and of Mary and Elizabeth who are both joyful in their unexpected pregnancies; and stories of miracles and cures that point the way to the Savior. Reflecting on these stories may help you come to a new understanding of waiting.

Take some time during this season to consider how you find hope and joy as you wait.

son their own small crib to keep in their room. Small bales of straw can be found at a craft store. Each person should add pieces of straw every day. Be sure to comment on the good work you have observed other members of your family do.

On Christmas Eve darken

Issue 2—

Waiting In Joyful Hope

December 9, 2007

Things to talk about:

- When something is worth waiting for, what do you do to help you get through the waiting?
- What are five things you are waiting for as you wait for Christmas?
- What are three things worth waiting for and working toward at this point in your life?
- What is one thing worth waiting for in your relationship with God?

Deliver us Lord, from every evil,
and grant us peace in our day.
In your mercy
keep us free from sin
and protect us from all anxiety
as we wait in joyful hope
for the coming of our Savior,
Jesus Christ.

(Sacramentary, p 562)

Preparing the Manger

As you prepare your heart and home to celebrate the birth of Jesus, you may set up a crèche (a manger scene). In France there is a custom that each night a child is asked to put one straw in the manger for each act of devotion, good work or sacrifice performed. When Christmas Day arrives, the baby Jesus

finds plenty of straw to keep him warm and make the manger more comfortable.

Although preparing the manger is geared toward children, this is a custom the whole family can practice. You can choose to have one large crib, in the main part of the house, or give each per-

the house and give the family lighted candles to hold as the youngest child places the baby Jesus in the manger. Have someone read Luke 2:15-20, and together sing a carol such as "Silent Night" or "O Come All Ye Faithful".

Adapted from: www.catholicculture.org/liturgicalyear/activities/



Saint in the Spotlight — Saint John of the Cross

This Friday, December 14, the church remembers Saint John of the Cross.

Ordained a Carmelite priest at 25 (1567), John met Teresa of Jesus (Avila) and like her vowed himself to the primitive Rule of the Carmelites. As partner with Teresa and in his own right, John engaged in the work of reform, and came to experience the price of reform: increasing opposition, misunderstanding, persecution, imprisonment. He came to know the cross acutely—to experience the dying of Jesus—as he sat month after month in his dark, damp, narrow cell with only his God.

Yet, the paradox! In this dying of imprisonment John came to life, uttering poetry. In the darkness of the dungeon, John's spirit came into the Light. There are many mystics, many poets; John is unique as mystic-poet, expressing in his prison-cross the ecstasy of mystical union with God in the *Spiritual Canticle*...

His prose works are outstanding in underscoring the cost of discipleship, the path of union with God: rigorous discipline, abandonment, purification. Uniquely and strongly John underlines the gospel paradox: The cross leads to

resurrection, agony to ecstasy, darkness to light, abandonment to possession, denial to self to union with God. If you want to save your life, you must lose it. John is truly "of the Cross." He died at 49—a life short, but full.

*Taken from www.americancatholic.org/
Features/SaintOfDay*

Advent Connections to Doctrine & Tradition

- What we mostly do during Advent is wait (CCC 522-544) and as we do, we are revealed to ourselves (CCC 359; GS 22)
- Advent begins anew our celebration of salvation history (CCC 1095, 1168-1173; NDC 37)
- Advent and Christmas focus our attention on the most important mystery, the Trinity, via the Incarnation (CCC 456-478; NDC 37)

CCC: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; GS: *Gaudium et Spes*; NDC: *National Directory for Catechesis*. These documents can be found online at www.vatican.va or www.usccb.org.

ADVENT WREATH PRAYER

Some things cannot be rushed.
O God of love, as we light these candles,
we pray for the grace to wait patiently.
Your people waited so long
for the coming of a Savior.
We, too, are anxious
for the celebration of your coming.
We pray to be ready and alert,
always trying to live
the life you want for us.
We light these candles
in the name of Jesus, the Christ,
who comes as light to the world. Amen.

From "Ministry Ideas", Claussen & Kielbasa, SMP

Be A Witness

Be a surprise to someone else while you're waiting this Advent season. Greet those around you while waiting in line at the store. Offer a note of appreciation to a teacher, a co-worker, a legislator, or a business that promotes an appropriate understanding of Christmas. Make sure you are sincere in your compliments.



Want to know more?

Would you like to know more about Advent? Check out the following books or websites for more information:

- *Catholic Customs & Traditions*, Greg Dues, Twenty-Third Publications, 2003
- A website with Advent ideas for your family: www.cptryon.org/prayer/adx/adprep.html
- An online Advent Calendar: www.smmmp.com/Advent/Advent.htm

These are just suggestions. In providing these we assume no responsibility for, nor do we necessarily endorse these books or websites, their content, or their sponsoring organizations.

"What's What" is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement [Draft]:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.