



December 7, 2018

The Nature of Waiting

I used the words of Henri Nouwen last week to recall that Advent is the season of waiting. But what is the nature of waiting? Waiting is never a movement from nothing to something. It is always a movement from something to something more. And, waiting is active.

Most of us think of waiting as something very passive, a hopeless state determined by events totally out of our hands. The bus is late? You cannot do anything about it. So you sit there, finding diversions on your phone, and wait. Someone says to you when you are impatient, "Could you just wait a moment?", and that seems to increase our irritability, and push us further into thinking of waiting as being passive.

But there is none of this passivity in scripture. Those who are waiting are waiting very actively. They know that what they are waiting for is growing from the ground on which they are standing. That's the secret. The secret of waiting is the faith that the seed has been planted, that something has begun. Active waiting means to be present fully to the moment, in the conviction that something is happening where you are, and that you want to be present to it. A waiting person is someone who believes that this moment is the moment.

Waiting involves nurturing the moment, as a mother nurtures the child that is growing in her. Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary were very present to the moment. That is why they could hear the angel. They were alert, attentive to the voice that spoke to them and said "Don't be afraid. Something is happening to you. Pay attention."

In Christ's grace,
Pastor Deb