



SAINT BONAVENTURE
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
LOVE GOD - LOVE OTHERS - MAKE DISCIPLES

Advent Reflections: Katie Kelly 12-2-20

A reading from the book of Isaiah,
*The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.
For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
From then on and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of armies will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:2,6-7)*

I think Advent might be my favorite liturgical season. I love the music, the traditions, the way the Church seems to stand still, yet fully alive, anticipating Christ. There is something so contradictory about the fact that this is the busiest season for many people as they prepare for the end of the year and Christmas, yet Christians are called to slow down and wait.

In the reflection for the first Sunday of Advent for Blessed is She, Sarah Rose wrote “
Advent: a season of already, but not yet.

A time of preparing for what we know has already happened.

A comforting paradox filled with hope and anticipation.

He is coming, and He is here right now.”

We know the end of the story. We know that Mary and Joseph will go to Bethlehem, and Mary will give birth to Jesus. We know the end of the story, but every year we hope and wait for Jesus to come.

The first Advent candle represents hope, and this year, more than ever, we are desperate for hope.

We, as a world, are anxiously awaiting normalcy. We are hopeful that there are vaccines and medical interventions coming soon to help us return to normal. We are hoping we can go

back to in-person learning, see and hug our aging family members, celebrate holidays as normal.

But the paradox of hopeful anticipation is true for all of us, in many different seasons of our lives. You may be anxiously awaiting a college decision letter. You may be anxiously waiting for God to reveal your vocation to you, or anxiously awaiting that next step in your life. You may be waiting to return to work, or looking for a job. And unlike the liturgical season of Advent, you may feel unsure about what the end of the story will be.

I have waited for a lot of things in life. I waited for cast lists in theater, auditions in choir, college letters, and job postings. And that moment between doing all you could have done and the answer can feel like an eternity. We all have our own seasons of Advent, of waiting, of hope.

Hope is something I struggle with. I like having a plan. I love checklists and planners. I hate surprises, and I do not like to feel unprepared. But the moments when I let go, when I have had hope and trusted God have been the most fulfilling moments of my life. Every time I hoped for something that did not happen, every single time something better did.

When I was in college, I wanted to study abroad in South Africa. I had dreamed of the trip long before I officially enrolled at St. Bens, and I had been anxiously awaiting application season. I applied early, prepped for my interview, and did literally everything in my power to go on that trip. And then I was rejected. And when I say it broke my heart, it still feels like an understatement nearly six years later. But with the help of a mentor, I pulled myself up out of the loss and applied to go to India. And India changed my life. It was at the Mother House where Mother Teresa lived and served that I fell in love with the Mass again and was reminded of the beauty of the faith. I was constantly challenged and asked to defend my faith, and even though I felt unqualified, I was able to do so. And if it wasn't for those experiences, I am not sure I would feel qualified to defend and teach the faith today. India changed my life.

And there has not been a day since that trip that I wished I was in South Africa.

Like everything, hope looks different this year. We may feel that hope isn't even something we can do as it has only led to disappointment. But hope in God is something that is never failing.

It is absolutely true this year looks like nothing we have ever seen before. But God is still the same. The story is still the same. No matter what, Jesus still came, and God is still working today.

Sources: <https://blessedisshenet/devotions/a-time-of-waiting-and-a-time-of-now/>