



Expectant Waiting . . .

As Advent comes and Christmas nears, I've been thinking. If I were God and I intended to become human. I would have liked at least a little bit of fanfare—maybe something like the teasers for upcoming movies, banners and balloons, a sky writer, or at least a massive bright flash of light coursing across the sky for all the world to see.

But my ways are so much different from God's who came to Elijah in a "tiny whispering sound" and to the world in cries of a small baby boy born in a smelly stable to poor parents, who were invisible to most of society and had to flee to a foreign land to seek refuge from a leader threatening the child's life.

With all the glitz and noise surrounding Christmas, I find it hard to enter into the quiet and expectancy of Advent that I suspect God is inviting us—becoming still in the wombs of our spirits to welcome Christ into our worlds.

For many of us it's a scary thought to even consider going to that place where we are known intimately by God, let go of control, and try to just be present in the seeming nothingness there. But that just might be the call of Advent.

How can we do this in the midst of shopping, wrapping, decorating, baking and parties? I remember when I was pregnant I would talk and sing to my unborn child while I was teaching a class, driving, or fixing dinner. That child was never out of my awareness. Lingering with some of the expectant and comforting readings from Isaiah that occur during Advent is one way I've found to keep me more in tune with the invitation to be more present even when things are swirling around me. Here's a sampling to get you started:



*They shall beat their swords
into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
One nation shall not
raise the sword against another,
nor shall they train for war again.
O house of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the LORD
(Isaiah 2:4-5)*

*Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
The calf and the young lion
shall browse together,
with a little child to guide them.*

*The cow and the bear shall be neighbors,
together their young shall rest;
the lion shall eat hay like the ox
The baby shall play by the cobra's den,
and the child lay his hand
on the adder's lair.*

*There shall be no harm or ruin
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled
with knowledge of the LORD,
as water covers the sea.
(Isaiah 11:6-9)*

*O house of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the LORD
On this mountain the LORD of hosts
will provide for all peoples
A feast of rich food and choice wines,
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.
On this mountain he will destroy
the veil that veils all peoples,
The web that is woven over all nations;
he will destroy death forever.
(Isaiah 25: 6-7)*

*Thus says the Lord GOD:
But a very little while,
and Lebanon shall be changed
into an orchard,
and the orchard be regarded as a forest!
On that day the deaf shall hear
the words of a book;
And out of gloom and darkness,
the eyes of the blind shall see.
The lowly will ever find joy in the LORD,
and the poor rejoice in the Holy One of
Israel (Isaiah 29:17-19)*

*Comfort, comfort my people says the Lord.
A voice cries out:
In the desert prepare the way of the LORD!
Make straight in the wasteland
a highway for our God!
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low;
The rugged land shall be made a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.
Then the glory of the LORD
shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.
(Isaiah 40: 1, 3-5)*

*I am the LORD, your God,
who grasp your right hand;
It is I who say to you,
"Fear not, I will help you."
(Isaiah 41:13)*

As things get even busier and Christmas approaches spending time with "O Antiphons," the Magnificat antiphons used at vespers the week before Christmas, can keep us connected to the meaning of the great feast we are about to celebrate:

December 17

*O Wisdom of our God Most High,
guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!*

December 18

*O Leader of the House of Israel,
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:
come to rescue us with your mighty power!*

December 19

*O Root of Jesse's stem,
sign of God's love for all his people:
come to save us without delay!*

December 20

*O Key of David,
opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom:
come and free the prisoners of darkness!*

December 21

*O Radiant Dawn,
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in
darkness and in the
shadow of death.*

December 22

*O King of all nations and keystone of the
Church:
come and save man, whom you formed from
the dust!*

December 23

*O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:
come to save us, Lord our God!*

May God lead you to what will enrich your Advent journeys. Come, let us join together to welcome God who lives and loves in us. O Come, O Come Emmanuel...

