

“***Be patient***, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord.

See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ***You too must be patient.*** Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. ***Do not complain***...about one another, that you may not be judged.” These are the beautiful words we just heard in the second reading today from the Letter of St. James the Apostle.

Not only are these words beautiful, but they’re undoubtedly necessary for all of us in 2019, and most especially now during the season of Advent when we are preparing for the coming of Christ at Christmas and at the end of time. Indeed, this great season of Advent is all about ***waiting*** and therefore I would say that Advent is designed to help us to grow in ***patience***.

Now I hate to sound like the Grinch, but it’s ***not yet*** Christmas, even though the secular world and the forces of consumerism have been forcing us to celebrate Christmas since October—***it is not yet Christmas*** and ***so we have to be patient! We all need patience, especially now***

during the Christmas shopping season when the stress levels are high and everyone's about to become a serial killer!

I think many would agree that in 2019, we live in an age of impatience, and to be more specific, we live in an impatient culture of *now!* We want *everything now, we don't like to wait!* God forbid if we have to wait for something, watch out! We want to lose all the weight *now*, we want professional success *now*, we want all of our problems gone *now, we want perfect sanctity now!* We want results *now!*

Given our advanced technologies and highly developed economy, the concept of "immediacy" is just part and parcel of who we are as a people in the United States. I mean, our cultural impatience has even translated into how we consume entertainment, with companies like *Netflix* releasing all of the episodes for a TV show *all at once*, not making us wait! This is the beauty of *streaming* and *we love it* as consumers because we don't want to wait anymore! Well guess what, God gives us the season of Advent to teach us *how to wait* and how to grow in patience in all things!

What *is* “patience”? The Modern Catholic Dictionary defines “patience” as: “A form of the moral virtue of fortitude. It enables one to endure present evils without sadness or resentment in conformity with the will of God. Patience is mainly concerned with bearing the evils caused by another. The three grades of patience are: to bear difficulties without interior complaint, to use hardships to make progress in virtue, and *even to desire the cross and afflictions out of love for God and accept them with spiritual joy.*” Wow, sounds pretty counter-cultural.

Furthermore, patience is one of the 12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit, which manifest the indwelling presence of God within a person’s heart. *Patience* is what helps to make heroes and saints! *Patience* leads to the greatness of holiness! *We all need to grow in patience*—patience with God, patience with others, and patience with ourselves.

Today’s the third Sunday of Advent, which in the Church is traditionally known as “Gaudete Sunday,” and in Latin, *gaudete* is a command that means “rejoice!” So why should we rejoice on this third Sunday of Advent when the Lord speaks to us of patience? Brothers and sisters, *there is a definite joy in waiting patiently for certain things.*

Patiently waiting for something can help build joyful anticipation and excitement! Patience can help enhance our enjoyment of something once it is time to enjoy it! This is certainly true about Christmas, especially for children. In the context of our Catholic faith, patience strengthens our joy and deepens our peace.

Patience builds virtue and fosters faith, hope, and love. And patience *most especially* fosters humility and selflessness. Patience helps to *lift us out of ourselves* and our narrow self-interest and places us in the realm of another, making us docile to the reality and the will of another. This is eminently true in the context of the Triune God, *who is so patient with us* in all of our weaknesses and faults.

Brothers and sisters, what will help us to grow in patience is that beautiful Golden Rule, taught by our Lord Jesus: “Do to others as you would have to do to you” (Luke 6:31). Now I’m going to craft another principle based on the same premise: *Be patient with God the way we want God and others to be patient with us!* Many of us struggle in patience with God. Yet we must *always remember* that God’s ways are *not* our ways and God’s time is *not* our time. *And with that, we must*

also remember that God's ways are infinitely *better than our ways and God's time is infinitely better than our time!*

With love and trust, comes patience. Our Heavenly Father loves us more than we love ourselves and He knows us better than we know ourselves and therefore He knows *infinitely better than we do* what will make us free, happy, and holy—*He's knows what's best for our sanctification and salvation!*

Patience enables us to see as God sees and to find God in all things. When we're waiting for something, we've given more time to encounter the Lord or to receive His actual grace, which strengthens us. Our beloved patron, St. Ignatius of Loyola, taught that it was essential "to find God in all things," and if we do, then we grow closer to God in faith, hope, and love and glorify Him in all things!

Brothers and sisters, with whom we do we need to grow in patience? Do we need to grow in patience with a spouse, a parent, a child, another family member, or a friend? Do we need to grow in patience with a co-worker or a boss? Do we need to grow in patience with our fellow drivers on the road or with that person in front of us in

the cash register line? Do we need to grow in patience with God, Who loves us beyond our comprehension? Do we need to grow in patience with ourselves if we feel weighed down by a certain struggle or burden?

Brothers and sisters, who do we want to be in life? Do we want to be bitter, impatient whiners who complain about everything? Or do we want to be joyful, *patient*, and humble disciples of Christ who strive to find the Lord in everything, even in times of great frustration and waiting? The choice is ours and the grace to follow through and persevere is poured out to us through Christ and His Church.

So as we prepare to worship and receive our merciful Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Most Holy Eucharist, Who is *so patient with us*, let's plead with Him for the grace to grow in patience, for as St. Teresa of Avila said, "Patience obtains all things."