



You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep.
For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near.”
Romans 13:11-12

Be attentive to the times of the day. We live in the fullness of time.
Every moment is God’s own good time. (*marker in the Cathedral of Sts. Peter & Paul in Llandaff, Wales*)

John Bowring:

Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are.
Traveler, o’er yon mountain’s height,
See that glory-beaming star.
Watchman, does its beauteous ray
Aught of joy or hope foretell?
Traveler, yes; it brings the day,
Promised day of Israel.

Jan L. Richardson:

THE SEASON of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before... .What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God’s back fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For pushing. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon.

Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas

Eugene Peterson

“Wonder keeps us open-eyed, expectant, alive to life that is always more than we can account for, that always exceeds our calculations, that is always beyond anything we can make.”

Joan Chittister

Advent is the season that teaches us to wait for what is beyond the obvious. It trains us to see what is behind the apparent. Advent makes us look for God in all the places we have, until now, ignored....The process of finding God in the small things of life is as profound as it is simple.

Advent is about learning to wait. It is about not having to know exactly what is coming tomorrow, only that whatever it is, it is the essence of sanctification for us. Every piece of it, some hard, some uplifting, is a sign of the work of God alive in us. We are becoming as we go. We learn in Advent to stay in the present, knowing only the present well lived can possibly lead us to the fullness of life.

We all want something more. Advent asks the question, what is it for which you are spending your life? What is the star you are following now? And where is that star in its present radiance in your life leading you? Is it a place that is really comprehensive enough to equal the breadth of the human soul? *The Liturgical Year*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

It is God, the Lord and Creator of all things, who becomes so small here, comes to us in a little corner of the world, unremarkable and hidden away, who wants to meet us and be among us as a helpless, defenseless child.

John Henry, Cardinal Newman

Lead, Kindly light, amid the circling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

Thomas Merton

If we really want prayer, we'll have to give it time. We must slow down to a human tempo and we'll begin to have time to listen. And as soon as we listen to what's going on, things will begin to take shape by themselves. But for this we have to experience time in a new way.

One of the best things for me when I went to the hermitage was being attentive to the times of the day: when the birds began to sing, and the deer came out of the morning fog, and the sun came up – while in the monastery, summer or winter, Lauds is at the same hour. The reason why we don't take time is a feeling that we have to keep moving. This is a real sickness. Today time is commodity, and for each one of us time is mortgaged. We experience time as unlimited indebtedness. We are sharecroppers of time. We are threatened by a chain reaction: overwork–overstimulation–overcompensation–overkill.

We must approach the whole idea of time in a new way. We are free to love. And you must get free from all imaginary claims. We live in the fullness of time. Every moment is God's own good time, his kairos. The whole thing boils down to giving ourselves in prayer a chance to realize that we have what we seek. We don't have to rush after it. It is there all the time, and if we give it time it will make itself known to us.

Caryll Houselander

How small and gentle his coming was. He came as an infant. The night in which he came was noisy and crowded; it is unlikely that, in the traffic and travelers to Bethlehem, the tiny wail of the newly born could be heard.

God approaches gently, often secretly, always in love, never through violence and fear. He comes to us, as God has told us, in those whom we know in our own lives.

Very often we do not recognize God. God comes in many people we do not like, in all who need what we can give, in all who have something to give us; and for our great comfort. God comes in those we love. In our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters, our friends and our children.... *The Passion of the Infant Christ*

Howard Thurman

Christmas Is Waiting to be Born

Where refugees seek deliverance that never comes
And the heart consumes itself as if it would live,
Where children age before their time
And life wears down the edges of the mind,
Where the old man sits with mind grown cold,
While bones and sinew, blood and cell, go slowly down to death,
Where fear companions each day's life,
And Perfect Love seems long delayed.

CHRISTMAS IS WAITING TO BE BORN:

In you, in me, in all mankind.

The Mood of Christmas & Other Celebrations (1985)

"Advent" by Christina Rossetti

This Advent moon shines cold and clear,
These Advent nights are long;
Our lamps have burned year after year,
And still their flame is strong.
"Watchman, what of the night?" we cry,
Heart-sick with hope deferred:
"No speaking signs are in the sky,"
Is still the watchman's word.

The Porter watches at the gate,
The servants watch within;
The watch is long betimes and late,
The prize is slow to win.

"Watchman, what of the night?" but still
His answer sounds the same:
"No daybreak tops the utmost hill,
Nor pale our lamps of flame."

One to another hear them speak,
The patient virgins wise:
"Surely He is not far to seek,"--
"All night we watch and rise."
"The days are evil looking back,
The coming days are dim;
Yet count we not His promise slack,
But watch and wait for Him."

One with another, soul with soul,
They kindle fire from fire:
"Friends watch us who have touched the goal."
"They urge us, come up higher."
"With them shall rest our waysore feet,
With them is built our home,
With Christ." "They sweet, but He most sweet,
Sweeter than honeycomb."

There no more parting, no more pain,
The distant ones brought near,
The lost so long are found again,
Long lost but longer dear:
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,
Nor heart conceived that rest,
With them our good things long deferred,
With Jesus Christ our Best.

We weep because the night is long,
We laugh, for day shall rise,
We sing a slow contented song
And knock at Paradise.
Weeping we hold Him fast Who wept
For us,--we hold Him fast;
And will not let Him go except
He bless us first or last.

Weeping we hold Him fast to-night;
We will not let Him go
Till daybreak smite our wearied sight,
And summer smite the snow:
Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove
Shall coo the livelong day;

Then He shall say, "Arise, My love,
My fair one, come away."

THEOLOGICAL HORIZONS
