



First Sunday of Advent

Today's world has a lot of advantages over that of years ago. Take waiting, for example. Before huge cineplexes in every neighborhood we used to actually have to buy tickets in advance, or wait in long lines for seats to movie openings. Remember *Star Wars*, anyone? Or, in more recent memory, the long wait for the next Harry Potter book?

On the other hand, it's good to muster the discipline for some kind of delayed gratification in life. Painful as it was, waiting for the bus, or for a favorite tv show to return after the long summer break, formed a certain character in us. I call on that character all the time, when I'm waiting for a medication to work, maybe, or waiting for test results from the doctor.

I'll bet you have daily challenges to that essential character trait too. Are you waiting for those painful pounds to come off—they will, I promise—or for news from a loved one who is deployed, or hospitalized, or just missing from your life? That kind of waiting is just agonizing.

Or maybe your long wait is to overcome a resentment that's had you in its grasp for decades. More likely, your wait is for healing for a child who is in the grip of depression, or an addiction, or has problems at school. That's the most agonizing wait of all.

I have an idea. How about if, this Advent, every reader of this column around the country prayed for someone who is reading these words right now? Talk about waiting. We won't know until we see Jesus who we were praying for, and who was praying for us. Ready? I can't wait.

How would you like your unknown prayer partner to pray for you?