

**HOMILY — First Sunday of Advent (C) 2018**  
**by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

If we will allow it, Advent will teach us about, school us again in, important lessons concerning WAITING, PATIENCE and JOYFUL EXPECTING.

Each year, we have this opportunity to learn, in a deeper way, the value in life of WAITING, PATIENCE AND JOYFUL EXPECTING.

Annie Dillard story —

About the cocoon and . . . about wanting to speed up the process of the butterfly emerging from the cocoon she was intently watching as a child.

She used a candle to gently warm the cocoon.

Sure enough, the butterfly emerged quite quickly.

But then she observed that the wings had not developed properly.

As the butterfly emerged from the cocoon, it became clear that the newly emerged creature was not able to fly.

And soon afterward, it died.

You see, a certain essential part of the maturing process had been short-circuited; a part that needed an allotted period of time.

So Advent is about schooling us more deeply about the value of WAITING, PATIENCE AND JOYFUL EXPECTING.

From time to time, our hearts get drowsy and lazy as we wait.

We become impatient with all sorts of big . . . and especially with little things.

We get tired out by the anxieties of daily life.

Maybe we distract ourselves from our troubles by working very hard, becoming depressed, becoming fascinated with drinking, sex, with out-of-control emotions, gambling, email, golf, surfing the web, pride or you name it.

The very clear message of Advent is, "Settle down for a while."

Open the door just a crack, so Jesus can be born again . . .

Pray that Christ be given birth again in your soul and in the soul of so many other folks in this world that need that birth so badly.

I was working on this homily yesterday morning.

I kept getting interrupted with other stuff and getting very impatient about it.

I like that sense of Advent being about schooling us in the values of patience and waiting and joyful expectation.

. . . and I look at God and I say, really?

I suddenly became aware of how terribly impatient I can be especially about the tiny little stuff in life.

Just one example:

I walked over to the wastebasket at one point to throw away a little scrap of paper. I tossed it toward the basket . . . and I missed. Suddenly I was impatient.

The first word out of my mouth was "Damn."

(Yep, that's right . . . and that man's a priest.)

Then the inner chatter went on: "I don't have time for this right now.

I have a homily to write . . . a homily about patience.

Suddenly I get a little peck on my cheek (by the Holy Spirit?).

This is a part of your Advent schooling"

In the second reading St. Paul urged us, as we wait and are schooled in patience to be, he says, "blameless in holiness"

True holiness, according to St. Paul, means that

we "increase and abound in love (love is a verb, we do it).

So, if you find yourself wishing some of your neighbors would just go away,

if you tell them in your thoughts or to their face to go to hell

— you do NOT love them.

And you are not blameless but blameworthy with regard to holiness

if you don't love them.

It doesn't matter how moral or legal your conduct is otherwise.

Our Advent schooling is a summons to take on more of the mind of Christ.

Jesus was often accused of meddling in affairs that were none of his business.

People said, "What gives you the right to speak about these things?" and

"Who gave you the right to do things only this priests can do?"

So part of our Advent schooling is about meddling.

We have been called by Christ, and in his name by the Church,

to meddle in things that affect people's welfare

and in what we call "the common good."

By our baptism into the body of Christ,

we are commissioned to meddle in politics, to meddle with the economy,

to meddle in racial justice issues, employment justice issues,

gender justice issues, justice for those immigrants clamoring

at our southern border and those in South Sudan.

And all that meddling requires that we be willing to deepen

those Advent lessons I spoke about in the beginning,

lesson about WAITING, PATIENCE and JOYFUL EXPECTING.

Without patience and a willingness to wait, our meddling

will be like tilting at windmills, as they say.

It will end up being fruitless

And the lesson about joyful expecting is so vital in a world where dreams and hopes get easily dashed.

We must open ourselves to being schooled in the virtue of HOPE, which is another way of saying joyful expecting.

God has a plan for transforming our world into a place of true justice and peace.

We need to be schooled in an attitude of joy and an attitude of fully expecting that eventually good will come of our patient endeavors for justice, for peace.

So, my friends, are you ready for an Advent of schooling in WAITING, PATIENCE and JOYFUL EXPECTING?