



A weekly reflection by members  
of the Precious Blood Community

**December 4, 2024**

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"The Waiting Is The Hardest Part"  
Tom Petty



I may be a GenX-Millennial, but I'm old enough to know the music of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. These lyrics echoed in my head as I thought about this week's readings. For two reasons.

First, we have entered the season of Advent, the time of waiting. As a Dad, I know well that my sons are looking forward to Christmas decorations (and presents of course!). They await the day with impatience and excitement. Even my teenager. Theologically, this is the time that we wait and keep vigil for the arrival of the Christ, God's indelible presence among us, in the vulnerable body of a newborn baby. This waiting happens every year.

Second, we are waiting for our lives to be re-balanced in the wake of the November presidential election. This happens every four years but this year is different. There seems to be no easy re-balancing. So many of us wait in anxiety and fear as we think of the heightened vulnerability of our loved ones and our neighbors. The political campaign that won the popular vote and the electoral vote was defined by resentment of the "other". That was the message.

But the readings remind us that the "others" are the same people who already are our brothers and sisters in God's eyes. And that Jesus would be an "other", too.

The Gospel reminds us of Jesus' preference for the vulnerable, and the "other", in his day. "Great crowds came to him, having with them the lame, the blind, the deformed, the mute, and many others. They placed them at his feet, and he cured them." Jesus initiated beloved community with those who were seen as "other" by the majority of his peers. We know this because of what he and his disciples do next: make a meal for everybody. They don't have much to offer but they pray, give thanks, work

together, and are able to feed everybody *and* have plenty of leftovers with only some loaves of bread and a few fish.

Everybody sits down and eats the same food together. Now that's a miracle! Not the multiplying of the food (although that is helpful) but the creation of a nurturing community where no community previously existed. Jesus teaches, heals, and feeds. Without prejudice, without exclusion, without condemnation. Jesus knew that sharing a meal is of the utmost importance for everyone's bodies, minds, and souls. The waiting is over. The kingdom community is arriving.

As we wait in this Advent season and in the aftermath of a noxious election, the Gospel calls us to account: who are the vulnerable "others" most at risk? Do we, as a Precious Blood Family, have the courage and compassion to become beloved community with them?

It reminds me of another Gospel story. After being reminded of the greatest commandments, a young religious man asked Jesus the question: "and who is my neighbor"? Jesus tells the tale of the Good Samaritan and answers the question by highlighting the vulnerable man who was victimized by thieves. He also challenges the questioner because the hero of the story was an "other"; a Samaritan. And Jesus instructs, "Go and do likewise".

Indeed, the waiting is the hardest part. In this season of anxious waiting, let us heed Jesus' words and deeds of compassion and mercy that will dispel fear, prejudice, and "othering". Amen.

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This weekly reflection is made available to all who are part of our Precious Blood family. Feel free to share it with others. Would you be willing to write a reflection? If so, please contact Vicky Otto at [votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org](mailto:votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org)