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## OUR WAITING SHOULD BE BUSY AND JOYFUL

Samuel Becket's classic play *Waiting for Godot* is about two men, down on their luck, who, as the title suggests, wait for a man named Godot, who has promised to meet them in a desolate place. The men, Vladimir and Estragon, chat about nothing, complain about everything and, generally, kill time. They successfully kill all the time the play allots to them and the work ends without any sign of the title character.

Becket has sketched a wonderful portrait of precisely what Christians should not do, and precisely what many of us do: wait, purposelessly, for something to give our lives meaning and structure. Godot (God, if you will) has already come into our lives and shown us how to live, how to act, how to love. Rather than being busy about the Lord's business, how many of us feel that we're still waiting for some further instruction?

**The kingdom of heaven is more than a personal goal.** Just as Jesus radically challenged the historical notion of who the Messiah would be and what he would do, he challenges us to redefine our understanding of the kingdom of heaven. His coming will bring the kingdom to its ultimate fulfillment.

**Christ's mission is our mission.** Yes, our faith assures us that there will be a second coming and an end to all things, but we are not to wait idly for that day. We must be at work every day bringing the kingdom to life in our work, our relationships, our world. As members of the body of Christ, we the church share his mission. Rather than waiting for someone or something outside ourselves to make a beginning, we must begin, at this moment, in these circumstances and, yes, with these people. "Man's vocation to eternal life does not suppress, but actually reinforces, his duty to put into action in this world the energies and means received from the Creator to serve justice and peace (CCC, #2820). "In the Lord's Prayer, 'thy kingdom come' refers primarily to the final coming of the reign of God through Christ's return. But, far from distracting the Church from her mission in this present world, this desire commits her to it all the more strongly" (CCC, #2818). As Paul has said, in some sense our work contributes to the great work of Christ.

**Our vigilance is required.** In asking us to be always watchful, Christ asks that we be zealous for our own salvation, but also that we be mindful of how we can bring others to Christ. In his last moments, Francis of Assisi exclaimed to his brothers, "We must begin again." We must take his words to heart, greeting each new moment as an opportunity to grow in faith and bring Christ to a broken and suffering world. Somewhere out there, people are waiting for us.

**Our faith is not an avocation, but our life's work.** Jesus warned those who would put a hand to the plow and then look back, encouraging us to be wholehearted in accepting the tasks before us. Saint Josemaria Escriva wrote, "Many people begin, but few finish. And we, who are trying to behave as God's children, have to be among those few. Remember that only work that is well done and lovingly completed deserves the praise of the Lord which is to be found in Holy Scripture: 'better is the end of a task than its beginning.'"

All the tasks we humans embrace have an ending, but that should make us more eager to accomplish the work before us. A comfortable retirement should inspire us to work harder rather than simply waiting for the years to tick by. Knowing that children grow up should encourage us to spend more-not less-time with the little ones in our families. An awareness of our morality should strengthen our resolve to care for-not disregard-our health and well-being. The Second Coming should be awaited with great joy, and hard work.



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*First Sunday of Advent*