



The labor pains of waiting

Prepare: Read John 16:20-23

Oh how hard it is to stay focused on God when our trials take a long time! Our eyes wander, Jesus fades from view, and the problems grab our attention like large billboards with neon colors. How could waiting possibly help us stand firm in our faith?

In John 16:20-23, Jesus speaks of women in labor. The pain is grievous, but after the baby is born, the pain is remembered as a sweet suffering well worth enduring.

Taking this analogy further, we can compare the whole pregnancy to the long journey of enduring a problem. For the first few months, we get quite sick to our stomachs; nausea makes the waiting very unpleasant. Sometimes, due to complications, the whole duration can be a horrible ordeal.

Just like a pregnancy, every problem does have an ending, even if it's not until we go home to heaven. So what should we do in the meantime?

How can we emotionally survive the wait and use it to become more spiritually mature and grow closer to God?

After the conception of new life, the womb becomes a sacred space, because God's handiwork dwells there. The woman's body might be suffering from nausea or back aches or labor pains, but inside that sacred space, a treasure is being nourished and formed.

In your prayer life, create a sacred space in your mind after asking the Holy Spirit to anoint



your imagination. It could be a secret room. It might be a field of flowers. Mine is a boat that I "built" with Jesus (we christened it "The Queen Mary"); it's often visited by the Blessed Mother who serves as hostess for our get-togethers.

Imagine every detail of your sacred space so that it feels real. Give Jesus a place to sit. Then bring to Jesus whatever problems you're dealing with, whatever you're suffering, whatever you're wishing would hurry up and come to an end. Ask him to transform it into blessings. Listen to his response. Thank him, lean on him, rest on his shoulder, and don't leave before you feel thoroughly loved.

Outside this place, get busy with the rest of your life. God has much adventure and many blessings to give you while you're waiting for the answer to your prayers.

Meanwhile, because you left your concerns with Jesus in your sacred space, they are being protected and nourished, like a developing fetus. When you feel a kick from that child or nausea, thank Jesus for taking care of the situation in ways that you cannot yet see, and remind yourself that the day *will* come when this child is ready to be born.

It's all part of a process and God is overseeing every detail.

Any time you suppose that a problem will never cease, go back to your sacred space and meet again with Jesus.