

Waiting for your train

Not long ago someone spray-painted this on the wall of a Boston MBTA station:

"Life is what happens while you wait for your train to arrive."

You don't have to be riding the T to see the truth in that graffiti since all of us are waiting for *something*.

-Some of us are waiting to hear from someone we love. Others wait for the lab results from last week's medical tests.

-Some can't wait to decorate the house for Christmas. Others can't wait for the season to end.

-Some wait for a long-overdue promotion at work. Others are counting the days to retirement.

-Some joyfully await the birth of a child. Others yearn for the college debt to be finally paid off.

All of us await the end to the pandemic, new vaccines and a return to a more "normal" life.

"Life is what happens while you wait for your train to arrive," whatever the train, whatever the destination.

All of this goes to the heart of what we do as we begin the Advent Season. A Christian is a person who expects new

ways of discovering Christ; encountering him in other people, new situations, unexpected challenges.

Sunday's gospel tells us that we begin to do this by being "alert and awake" to what is going on around us: paying attention to right now (Mark 13:35-37).

So, while you might be awaiting your next train to arrive, don't lose sight of those around you on the passenger platform.

Who is standing alone? Who in the crowd is afraid?

Who feels like they are falling apart? Who is having a hard time finding their way?

Who has a capacity to bring joy to others? Who is eager to help in some way?

Who is able to speak difficult truths without an angry "edge?" Who instills hope?

To be open to all of it: This is what it means to live life while waiting for the train.

For centuries, on the darkest days of the year, Christians have lighted candles on wreaths while awaiting the arrival of Christmas.

We should never forget that the candlelight represents *us*.

This ancient gesture expresses a hope that whatever momentary darkness the world is experiencing, Christ

working through us and in us, would bring about much good and an abundance of light.

Years ago the Christophers had a saying: *"It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness."*

Light your candles with a prayerful resolve.

As we await the next train, each in our own way, may Christ's light equip us to overcome much darkness.

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