

# GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



It might go without saying that the virtue of patience is quickly being lost in our society. The ability to initiate instant contact with persons and information through a variety of electronic devices is a part of life these days. How quickly agitated we become when the WIFI connection is disrupted or nonexistent. Equally upsetting is when a sent e-mail or text is not immediately answered. Such a circumstance can propel us to question whether the person communicated with even cares about us. As life progressively moves forward at a quick pace, it is easy to lose the ability to be patient and wait. But, patience and waiting is how God interacts with us.

Have you noticed that God never seems to rush, even when we tell Him that we need an answer right now? Have you likewise noticed that God is in no hurry to return, letting His present day disciples deliver His love through their ministry?

## CALLED TO SERVE ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY Vocation Newsletter

With all of the problems facing the world, the Church and our individual lives, would it not behoove God to move a bit faster in answering our prayers and bringing peace to the world? Moving slowly, methodologically and purposefully is how God operates. God has always operated this way. Being patient is God's "slo-mo-dus operandi.

The Sacred Scriptures instruct us that God always moves slowly. God thinks about what He is doing so that all that God creates is a beautiful reflection of His very self. In the creation narratives of Genesis 1 and 2, God slowly produces all that is created, giving thought to its

purpose. Even the slugs and platypus have a place in the genius of God's creation. The narrative has God creating the universe in six days because God was giving thought to what was created. The slow, purposeful movement of God allows for the true reflection of God to shine forth. This includes you and me, as well. God was patient in slowly creating the universe that it could be perfect for us.

The Scriptures likewise tell us of God's desire to form into a nation, a people who would be the beneficiaries of His love and grace. God formed the Chosen People of Israel into His people that He could love them and bless with that best of His grace. Through previously unseen signs and wonders, God delivered His people from their bondage and brought them to freedom. Even as they grumbled during and after their exodus, God never stopped loving them. Despite their sins, God lavished His choicest portions upon God's chosen ones. While the actions of the people angered and disappointed God, He never gave up on the people. Patiently, God sent judges, Kings David and Solomon, and prophets to remind the people of His love for them. God wanted His people to





find their way back to Him. Sometimes they did and sometimes not. Yet, God patiently waited for them to return, for His purpose in making them His people was never lost, to love and bless them. Their moments of exile were the result of their choice not to honor the covenant with God. Yet, as they slowly made their way back to God, God patiently waited.

When Israel returns to their country, Ezra and Nehemiah move the people to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and to return to the practice and study of the Torah, the Law of God. The day arrives to celebrate the feast of Tabernacles and rededicate the restored Temple. Nehemiah calls the people together that they can rededicate

direction our discernment should take would greatly aid our decision process. In reality, such a sign would awe us for the moment without aiding us to deeply understand what God is asking of us. God knows what He desires of us and what He invites us to do for Him with our lives. Bringing us slowly and methodologically to understand our purpose in God's plan makes us partners with God in the universal story of God's love. And even when He clearly shows us the path for our lives and we slowly respond to the divine invitation, God patiently waits because he wants a partner not a robot. This is how God dealt with Israel and it is how He deals with us. Robots do what they are told with no intention. Partners willingly

## Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

- 1. When I am patient in discernment, what do I hear God saying to me?**
- 2. How does the image of God being patient with you aid or hinder your discernment? Why?**
- 3. How can I be patient with God, with myself as I discern God's call for my life?**

themselves to practice of the faith through observance of the Law. Nehemiah tells the people "do not be sad; the joy of the Lord is your stronghold... be at ease; this is a sacred day. Do not be sad" (Neh 9:10-11). Ezra is asked to read the Law and the people find hope. As part of the day is the ceremony of atonement for the people's sins and they prayed noting that God, "you were patient with them" (Neh 9:30). They realized that even in their sinfulness God was patient with them. Patience is the way of God's mercy. Patience is the way God deals with us. Patience is the way we need to let God work in our lives. God's patient working in our lives which is slow, methodological and with purpose is meant to give us time to respond to the grace which God bring to our lives, just as He did for the people of Israel in the scriptures.

Like so many moments in our lives, discernment can be too slow for us. We feel the call of the Lord to give our lives to love of Him and his people through service in the community of religious life, and yet God seems to slowly give us a clear answer to our prayers. A clear and phenomenal sign from God about the

enter in a relationship with the purposeful intention of loving each other and those whom their love touches. Discernment is waiting patiently upon the Lord, slowly learning with each encounter with God, how we are being invited to form a life-long partnership with God where love is given and received, for our good and the good of those we will serve as consecrated religious. God's patience with us helps us learn our place in the plan of God. Our patience with God is the willingness to let God reveal our place in His plan which comes slowly, methodologically and purposefully because God wants a partner as His servant.



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