



Capitol Comments:

Lent: It's not always easy to wait, but at least we know the Ending

Maria Huemmer, Public Relations and Outreach Coordinator, Texas Catholic Conference

I don't like to wait. I personally believe that God is working extra hard to give me plenty of opportunities to learn patience. But when I calm down, and maybe count to 10...20...50... I realize waiting is often good for me, or at least bearable. Waiting, in addition to helping us practice patience, is celebrated in our liturgical year and in our relationship with God.

A lot of people talk about the instant gratification expected by our society. Instant contact through the internet, instant (OK near-instant) food through drive-thrus and microwave meals, and even instant answers and satisfaction in our faith lives. Lent is a time for prayer, fasting, and waiting. Hopefully, we make time to remember what we're waiting for and to offer our own prayers and sacrifices in gratitude to that ultimate sacrifice.

The Texas State Legislature is in the interim year, as they only convene in the odd-numbered years. But while we at TCC wait for the next session to start, we are also preparing ourselves. We monitor committee assignments and hearings, and work on ideas and concepts that can be developed into bills. However, we cannot say with certainty that these efforts during the interim will lead to bills during the legislative session.

Waiting to see how our public policy efforts turn out and waiting to start them up again can sometimes be antagonizing. Last session we visited every legislative office on various issues. Hundreds of Catholics made legislative visits during our Advocacy Days to ask for support of adult stem cell research and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and opposition to abortion, the death penalty, and unjust criminal justice and immigration practices. We made phone calls, testified at hearings, and prayed...and yet several of these goals were not met. I'm certain I'm not the only one who asked, "God, why aren't our prayers to end abortion, hunger, war, and hatred working?"

When things don't go our way, especially when we truly believe that our way is God's way, we feel overwhelmed, lost, wanderers in all of the evil in the world. But we must remember that this wonderful event that we anticipate during Lent is the freedom from the slavery of death. Remembering the Israelites who were freed from slavery in Egypt, we must recognize that sometimes God wants us to wander. Do we have the patience to wait for 10, 20, 40 years for an answer from God? Rather than grumbling, doubting God, losing hope, or creating false imitations of God, we must remember the cross, and with it the resurrection, which has secured eternal life.

We are encouraged by Paul to "persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith." This Lent, through our prayers, our volunteering and our advocacy, let us find comfort in our period of waiting, recognizing that luckily we know the ending, our victory is won.

For more information on the public policy work of the Texas Catholic Conference, visit www.TXcatholic.org.