

Homily for the 3rd Sunday of Advent [A]

Fr Justin Driscoll

December 13th / 14th 2025, 6.00pm Ballarat East, 9.00am, Bungaree, 10.30am Ballan

The image I share with you for this third Sunday of advent is another bronze sculpture that's titled "**Waiting with Patience**"



It's from Burkino Faso and it's inspired by the African proverb: "**Patience is the Mother of a Beautiful Child**"

Without patience, other virtues struggle to manifest; it's the essential quality that makes sustained virtuous living possible. We're perhaps more familiar with the proverb that *patience is the mother of all virtues* – virtues being those cultivated habits, developed through practice, that help us discern and act rightly, leading to a flourishing life – these include virtues such as faith, hope and love, as well as humility, kindness and generosity, and then there's justice, courage, honesty and compassion. St Augustine said that patience is the companion of wisdom. So patience and wisdom as companions, that go together. True wisdom isn't just about knowing things; it's about having the perseverance over time to understand, reflect, and act thoughtfully, allowing for deep thinking, discerning fully, and waiting for the right moment, making it essential for developing true insight and making sound choices.

The letter of James that we proclaimed as God's Word on this third Sunday of Advent spoke of patience and its necessity until the coming of the Lord. He used an image of patience that we can readily relate to that of one who works the land, patiently waiting for the precious fruits of the earth - whatever they may be, spuds, wheat, canola, grapes, often though this waiting is as much powerlessness as patience. Waiting though isn't always positive. Just this past week our attention has been drawn to the thousands of medically fit senior Australians who are stuck in hospitals, waiting for aged care beds. Nor is what might be called patience always positive, especially when it's used to control or manipulate. It was Margaret Thatcher who said that she was extraordinarily patient, provided she got her own way in the end.

The scriptures of advent hold hope and promise, waiting and fulfillment all in creative tension – even John the Baptist, isolated in a prison cell, asks with desperate hope, sends his disciples with the question “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another? Isaiah and all of the prophets had great hope and faith in the transformation that God could bring even in the wilderness – singing and dreaming of the transformation that God's coming will work.

St James' letter tells us that growth and harvest don't happen overnight just as we need to work at our discipleship, knowing that it is God who gives the increase. While we might consider our own levels of patience the advice of St Frances de Sales is wise in saying *Have patience with all things but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them - every day begin the task anew.* We need the remaining days of advent to sow again in the field of our hearts the sure hope of our salvation.

Come Lord Jesus!