

Opening Prayer

God of Advent darkness,
God of the womb and the tomb,
God of all sacred waiting,

You dwell in the space between longing and
belonging,
between promise and fulfillment,
between now and not yet.

Teach us to wait with wonder,
to balance on the edge of mystery,
to rest in the unknowing
where joy gestates in silence.

As Mary waited, carrying you within her,
teach us to carry our longings
as holy things,
not problems to be solved
but mysteries to be pondered.

We ask this through Christ our Lord,
who comes, who is coming, who will come.
Amen.

Closing Prayer: A Blessing for Waiters

God of Advent darkness,
God who waits with us,

Thank you for teaching us tonight
that waiting is not wasted time
but sacred space.

Enlarge our hearts with wonder,
that we might see your beauty
even in the not-yet.

Give us balance—
strength with flexibility,
reverence with humor,
hope with realism.

Awaken us to mystery—
to the truth that our souls already dance in
eternity
even as our bodies ache with longing.

Help us remember:
We are bridges between heaven and earth,
between longing and belonging,
between now and forever.

And in this waiting,
may we discover joy—
not the joy that comes when waiting ends,
but the joy that blooms
in the sacred soil of waiting itself.

We ask this through Christ our Lord,
who waited nine months,
who waits still at the door of our hearts,
who will come again.
Amen.

Finding Joy Advent Retreat Session #2

Theme: Joy As Waiting

This Week's Practice:

- Morning Wonder Walk (2 min)
- Balance Practice (30 sec, twice daily)
- Soul Light Breath (1 min at bedtime)
- Longing Prayer (whenever you feel the ache)

Daily Examen Questions:

- What surprised me with wonder today?
- Where did I need balance today—and did I find it?
- What am I longing for? Can I honor that longing as holy?

Reflection Questions:

- *When was the last time I experienced genuine wonder—when I stopped and was amazed by something?*
- *Where in my life right now do I feel rigid, brittle, unbalanced?*
- *What would it mean for me to practice flexibility—spiritual balance—in my current waiting?*
- *What is my deepest longing right now? What am I waiting for?*

Quote to Carry:

- *"Waiting is its own ripening, and longing is the first force of belonging."*
— John O'Donohue