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A rainbow is seen in late June 2020 as a wheat field is irrigated after authorities announced a drought risk for the summer in Sully-lez-Cambrai, France.
(CNS/Reuters/Pascal Rossignol)



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The third Sunday of Advent is a unique one, often called "Gaudete Sunday" because the waiting is almost over and we will have reason to rejoice soon. In the meantime, in the day's [Mass readings](#), James asks us to "be patient" like the farmer who is waiting on the new life of their crops (James 5:7).

While I am not a farmer, I know what it is like to wait. We all do. We wait for a loved one to come home. We wait for a paycheck to make its way into the bank account. We wait for news about our health, that job we applied for or acceptance into a life-changing program. Waiting is a common experience, so how do we heed James' advice and be patient when God sometimes moves at the pace of a farmer's crop?

I am not a patient person. I spent the past four months job-hunting on a temporary but insufficient income and I hope to never experience something like that again. From August through November, I put in countless hours of work rewriting cover letters, updating my resume, and sweating through numerous interviews. I wondered when it might yield some sort of fruit, and desperately prayed for a rain that would saturate what seemed like impossibly dry ground.

I grappled with patience during those four months as I struggled to pay my bills, and the Lord came to me over and over again through the generosity of family, friends and acquaintances. I planted seeds like the farmer, and even though I could not perceive God's movement in the quiet work of roots forming beneath me, their support showed me that I could trust in "the coming of the Lord," and thus my heart was made firm (James 5:8).

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The Gospel of Matthew tells us what it will be like to rejoice when the waiting is over: "the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them" ([Matthew 11:5](#)). When my time of waiting had finally come to an end, it felt like the dry ground coming to life after drinking in a soft and satisfying rain. It was the freshness of regained sight, new possibilities and life-giving good news. I could breathe again.

I returned to three lines in the third Sunday of Advent's readings from the Book of Isaiah and noticed they spoke to me differently than they had when I first read them: "The desert and the parched land will exult" (Isaiah 35:1); "the tongue of the mute will sing" (Isaiah 35:6); "sorrow and mourning will flee" (Isaiah 35:10).

Initially, the word "will" in each of those phrases seemed to taunt me — like a reminder that the desert, the mute and the sorrowful were still waiting to rejoice, much like I was still waiting for relief.

Reading them again, however, it felt more like a promise. While there will be times we identify with the desert enduring a significant dry spell, God promises that those times will not last forever.

The waiting ends. The rain comes. The parched land exults.

This story appears in the **2022 Advent Essays** feature series. [View the full series.](#)