

PATIENCE, PEOPLE

That's the title of a beautiful St. Louis Jesuits song from their Christmas album that came out the year I was ordained—40 years ago. As with most of their songs, it takes snippets of scripture and weaves those words into a contemporary message, in this case, for the season of Advent which we begin today.

However, those also the words I'd like to shout at other drivers when I'm travelling on 80/94, the Bishop Ford or I294. "Patience, people!" Why is everyone in such a hurry? Why do so many feel the need to be almost literally attached to the bumper of the car in front of them, especially when there are several miles of virtual bumper-to-bumper traffic ahead and there's nowhere for anyone to go and no way to drive any faster? Is it arrogance, entitlement, selfishness, carelessness, thoughtlessness? Or is it simply an unbridled impatience with a world that isn't moving fast enough to satisfy the need to have it all and to have it all **now**?

Advent is the perfect season to work at counteracting the impatience that we see all around us and that we probably find percolating in our own lives all too often. If I were to name the sin that is most often confessed in the Sacrament of Penance, it would almost certainly be impatience. But so much of what we hear in the scriptures, especially in Advent, counsels **patience** because, as St. Peter will remind us next weekend, "with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day." If we are to live honestly and faithfully as children of God, then, like God, we have to learn to take the long view in our own lives, in our relationships, and in our reactions to events that transpire in our world.

No matter how long each of us may spend on this earth, we'll never be able to accomplish all our goals, overcome all our faults, see everything we'd like to see, heal every hurt we've caused or suffered, experience every joy we've ever pursued—or perhaps, see the Cubs win another World Series. As I often say, that's what heaven is for (well, not that last one). No matter how fast the internet may be, how smart our phones might become, how much instant information Alexa or Echo can provide, life in this world will always require patience—with others and perhaps, most of all, with ourselves.

So—patience, people! Slow down, live in the moment, enjoy the ride, appreciate the view. Let Advent teach us something we very much need to learn: whether in life or on the road, we'll all get where we're going eventually—but it will be in God's time, not ours.

Fr. Bob