



*St. Jude's Church
Stony Hill*

Our Hope and Expectation

*Invitation to Advent
Watchfulness in the Wilderness*

"Humankind is like a tree; bodily asceticism is the leaves, interior watchfulness the fruit. As the Scriptures say, 'Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire' (Matthew 3:10). All our care should be directed toward the fruit..." (The Wisdom of the Desert Fathers and Mothers (Paraclete Essentials) (Abba Agathon p. 119). Paraclete Press. Kindle Edition.

The desert monk/father Abba Agathon is redirecting us to reflect on this new wilderness-like reality we see each day. The lives lost through the pandemic, crime and road fatalities, mixed with the overall feeling of loss in our daily routines, continues to affect our modes of living. This experience calls us to live like a monk in our own dwelling place, (the ascetic life) seeking greater knowledge of the movement of God in a time like this.

Interior watchfulness can be kin to mindfulness as there are some overlaps between them and is most appropriate as we live the ascetic life. Being mindful and watchful is most helpful in this era of many distractions. Being spiritually watchful in Christ can help us navigate and keep a healthy state of mind, so that we can be fruitful in the work of Christ.

Therefore, Abba Agathon is reminding us of the task to still bear good fruits for Christ's sake even in the wilderness in which we now live.

The season of Advent is a season that calls for watchfulness, and a mindfulness of the work of our God. We are ever grateful for the work of the St. Jude's Writers who again provide another Advent series of reflections that will take us into this season with a spiritually watchful mind.

We pray that as we continue to journey through the usual themes of Hope, Love, Joy and Peace amid these strange times, we will let the final awaiting and coming of our Lord produce the fruits from the seeds that have been sown in us each day.

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