

## **ADVENT**

**By T. Pitt Green**

**(490 Words)**

Many survivors of childhood abuse talk about waiting for healing, and some talk about losing hope at times. Others talk about wandering and feeling lost. But waiting is very important. It takes time for Jesus to come into our broken hearts and give us peace.

Advent is a time of waiting. It is like a long Feast day, dedicated to waiting. I am a survivor of abuse. Waiting to be healed by Jesus coming into my life has taught me many things. First, I learned how to train my heart on His promise never to forget me. He has kept this promise. He has been born anew in my wounded life.

Advent traditions my Hispanic brothers and sisters share offer comfort to survivors. In this season of waiting, many Hispanic families offer special prayers in the evening while they wait for the coming of our Savior. Prayer while we wait in the dark of winter – or the darkness of our spiritual journey – brings many gifts. Prayer in darkness helps us grow strong as we rely on God's promises. It taught me to trust as I waited for Him to save me.

The family is so important to Advent. Yet it is also something that can be painful for people who have survived abuse. Sometimes family members are estranged because abuse wounds families as well as children. Advent reminds us how God did the impossible to save us from death and pain. He found us, estranged and lost as we were.

Think of las posadas caroling as the Holy Family, lost and searching for haven. This walk ends in prayer and celebration. It reminds us God will keep His promise. He will send His Son. His Son will save us. And we can be happy again.

God gave us His only Son, Jesus. Jesus gathers all our wounds. We are not created to be wounded. We are created to love God with joy. So, Jesus helps us find love and joy now, in Christmas and always. That is why He heals us now, in this moment, even from the pain of childhood wounds.

Our Lady knows how lonely and scary our wandering can be when we are hurt. She loves us and encourages us to grow closer to Her Son. Juan Diego was frightened when he was asked to take bold steps beyond his wildest dreams, but Our Lady helped him. She helps us too. She guides us to her Son for healing.

For survivors of childhood abuse, las posadas can seem more about loneliness than hope. Yet, God made the same promise to everyone, including survivors. God is a Father who keeps His promises. Mary, our Mother, helps bring those promises to life in our lives, in the form of a little baby, Christ the Lord.

Advent is a time when we can, again, learn to wait, pray, and dare to believe. God will meet us there, in our prayers.