

Holy impatience

I'm tired of waiting for justice. But I am learning to face a world coming to an end with the gift of God who is World Without End.

by [Rachel Mann](#) in the [August 2026](#) issue
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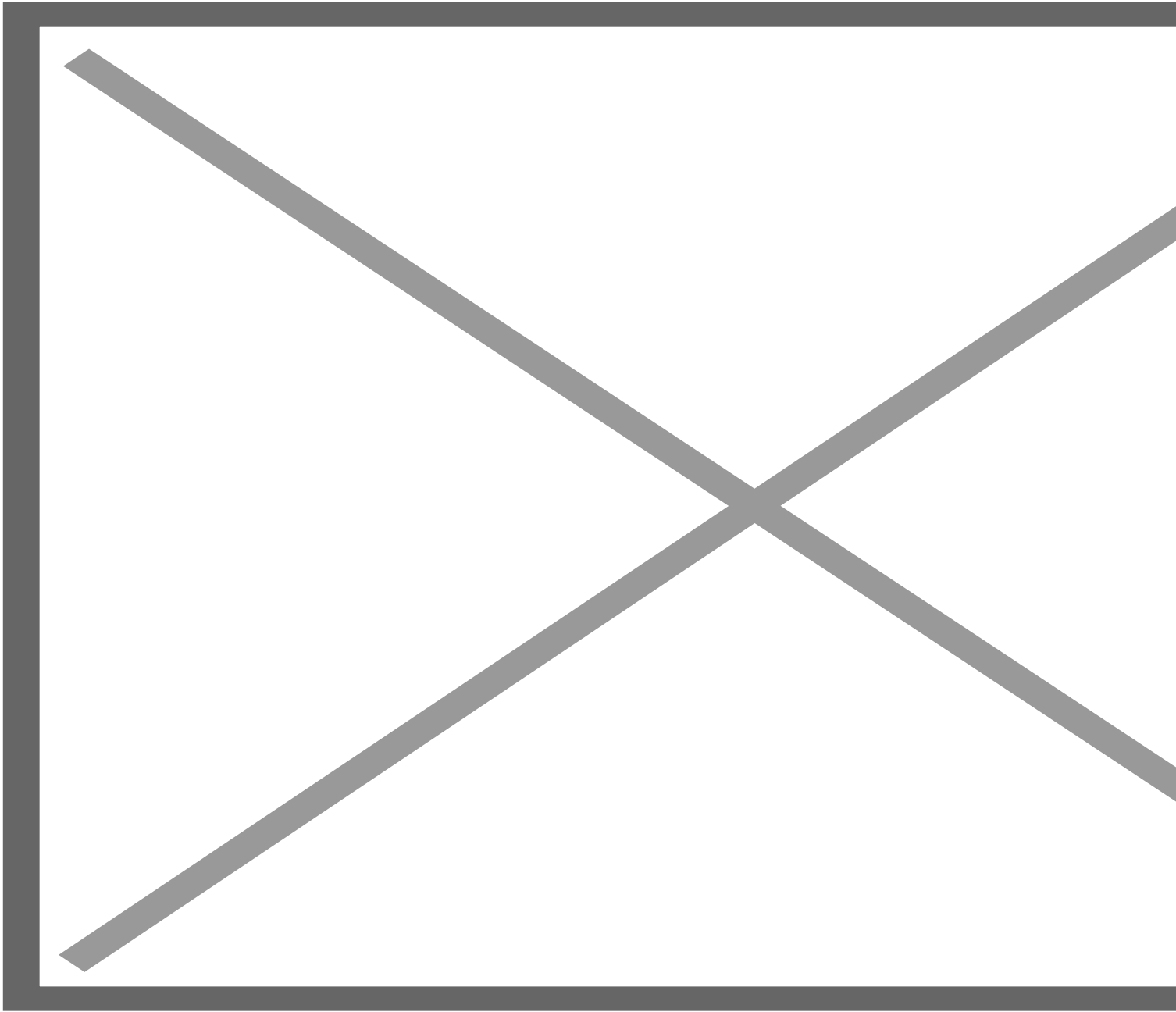


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I am not a patient person. As a Brit, I may be acclimated to our quintessential cultural institution, the queue, but the truth is I want things now. I really do not like to wait. I want my online delivery immediately; I want to get through to my doctor or customer service representative right now. And, spiritually and theologically, I am impatient for God's justice and kingdom.

In our high-tech world, most consumer desires can be almost instantly gratified. If you hold sufficient economic power, your physician will take your calls. However, I am yet to find a way to speed up the full and manifest arrival of God's new day in a broken world. Indeed, most of the time I feel as if the prospect of God's justice, love, and mercy spirals ever farther away. I used to be confident that the arc of the moral universe bent toward justice. Now I am not so sure, and I am impatient.

Is it possible to reframe waiting in a positive way, especially for those of us who struggle with its implications? Perhaps one approach is to lean into Paolo Freire's famous line, "As long as I fight, I am moved by hope; and if I fight with hope, then I can wait." This column is not the place for a detailed analysis of Freire's take on liberation theology. However, when I or my friends groan in the face of the seeming decay of liberal democracy, I remember Freire's words. To struggle for justice, mercy, and love is a way to be moved by hope; more than that, in fighting unfair situations with hope we can find the wherewithal to wait. For waiting ceases to be something that is done to us and becomes something pregnant with promise.

Struggle, resilience, and defiance matter, but I think there is even more to a holy waiting charged with God's divine fecundity. To appreciate it, it is helpful to consider those well-known words with which John's Gospel begins: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being" (1:1–3). They remind me, amid my fears and anxieties, that Jesus Christ was not merely a good man with a kind and gracious message. From the beginning, Christ has been God's Word, who was before, is now, and shall ever be, world without end.

How does this momentous truth help me wait with hope and joy in the present, terrifying moment? Well, John reminds me that Jesus as the Word of God is the starting point for understanding the world. It is God's world, not ours. Most of us have become too accustomed to reading reality on a chronological, beginning-middle-end pattern, with ourselves at the center. John subverts that, reminding us that Christ is Alpha and Omega.

In Christ's incarnation, we are invited to dwell in God's time and reality rather than become overwhelmed by our human understanding of what is going on. God asks us to locate ourselves in the realm of Jesus Christ, whose birth, life, death, and resurrection transform all things. The telling point, the pivot, is resurrection. The story of God is a reminder that fear, death, anxiety—real though they are—are not the final words. We can dwell and wait in the fearsome challenges of the present, because God is remaking the world in Jesus Christ. When Jesus says to let tomorrow take care of itself, he is not offering advice for those seeking serenity and mindful centering. The kingdom that is here and is yet to come is no mere rhetorical device. God's reality is definitive.

When I think this way, I feel overwhelmed by the wonder of God. That is as it should be. Our words and understanding are not adequate to the Word. Our metaphors, our similes, our sentences, our poetry, our novel-making and word-making fall short of the language of God. As we encounter God we fall silent. God has passed by in the pillar of cloud, leaving us slack-jawed, haunted, and dazed. We are undone. This way of talking may hardly seem to address pressing matters of politics and ethics where economic and social futures seem foreclosed. However, to confront a world coming to an end with the gift of God who is World Without End may yet—for those with more politically and socially charged minds and bodies than mine—present a moment when poetics transforms politics.

Even if I am being naive, to come before the living God as one who waits in wonder and awe is a wiser and truer way of being than that of waiting in anxiety and impotence. There is joy to be found in acknowledging that Christ is the Word who was and is and is to come. That acknowledgment is a moment when waiting takes a step toward God's community of reconciliation and forgiveness, ready to face and act for good in a world in need of love's redeeming work.

Holy waiting, then, can be full of joy. It is part of the story and glory of God. Jesus comes into our midst and shows us the deepest reality of the world. He shows us that, for all of life's irritations, frustrations, and sheer grimness, the universe is made in love and, therefore, we are called toward joy. We need to hear this. Well, I do anyway. It is the deep, truthful response to this age that is passing away. Christ's story is the glorious resistance to any story that says there is no story.