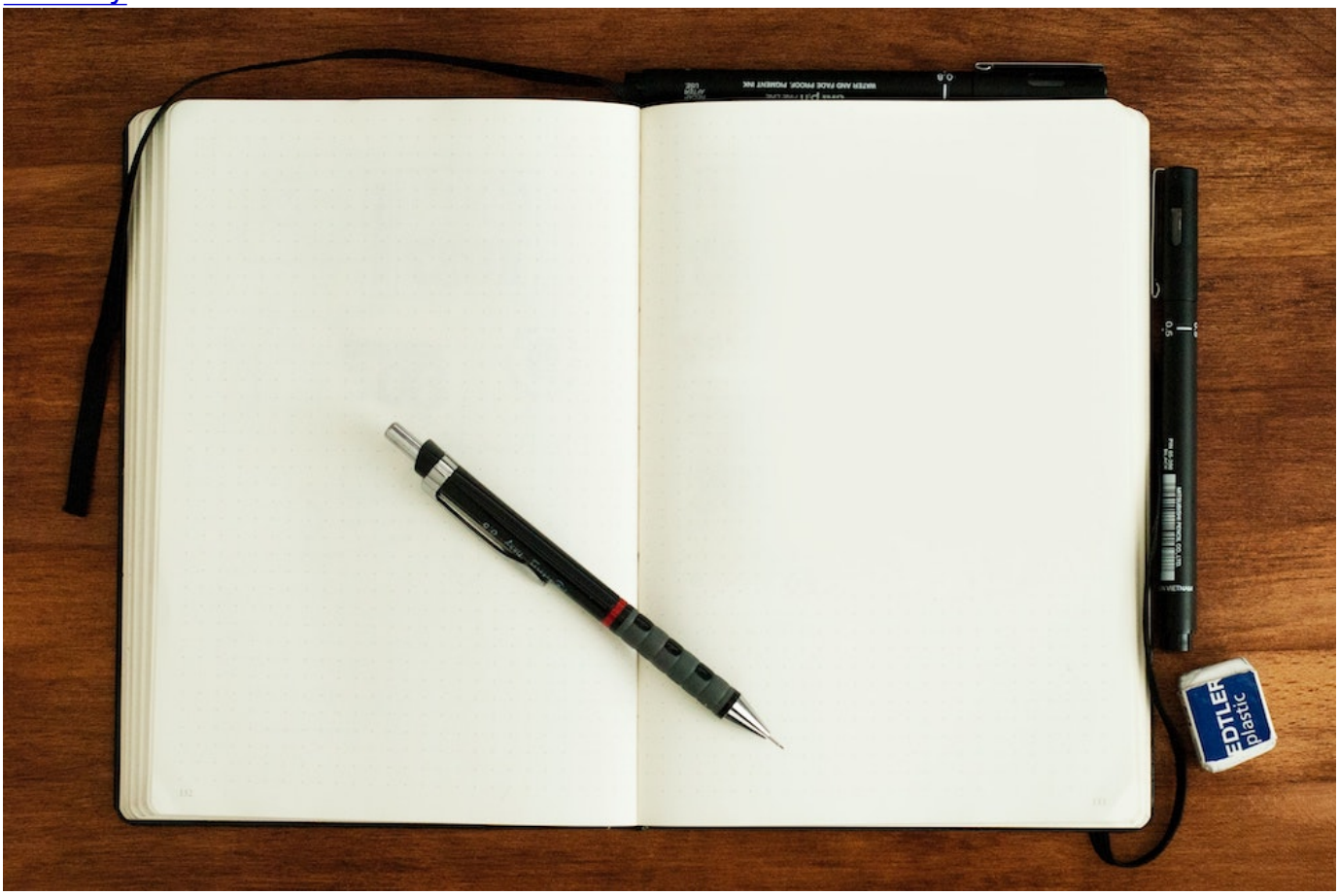
Voices of Sisters
Ministry



(Unsplash/Mike Tinnion)



by Sr. Clare Boehmer

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After living for 84 years and spending 60 of those years in varied active ministries as a vowed Adorer of the Blood of Christ, I've recently retired and developed a part-time freelance writing ministry. I often get the question — sometimes phrased hesitantly and delicately, sometimes asked more directly — "What are you doing these days?"

The short answer is, "I'm learning how to live life in a 'Wait for it; watch for it; trust it' mode." The long answer is more enlightening for anyone who has the patience, the desire and the time to listen. These opening lines from a poem I've written recently can serve as introduction to that long answer:

Blank pages greet my days, their gleaming

whiteness inviting me to fill them with words

that sometimes try to plumb the depths of being

and express that which cannot be fully said.

. . .

Blank days greet me after nights of peaceful sleep.

Their planned and unplanned hours inviting me

to things familiar; to things as yet unknown,

maybe even previously unimagined.

The "it" in my waiting for it, watching for it and trusting it can be anything that I experience during any given day: something as solemn and as privileged as sitting with a sister who is dying alone or with a beloved family member at her bedside.

Or maybe it's as light as a laugh with a co-worker who has shared a joke, or watching a video of his or her beloved grandchild, or listening to a description of the latest antic of a much-loved cat or dog. "It" can be as superficial as a hasty and smiling "Good morning" in passing, or as deep as a profound experience of the presence of God in prayer.

"It" can be scheduled time with my sisters in prayer, at meals, at celebrations with my local community or by Zoom sessions with sisters who live in various places in the region or on mission thousands of miles away. "It" might be unscheduled contact with a friend, or a Facebook post or text message that needs a more personal response than merely a thumbs up or an appropriately expressive emoji or graphic. "It" can be something routine, or maybe something never experienced before.

"It" can be something or someone who moves my heart to joyful song or to compassionate sharing of another's pain. "It" can be something done or said or by someone just being herself or himself that is itself a blessing, or "it" can be a person or a situation that has crossed my path to be blessed by the God who lives within me. Or maybe it's simply being in the presence of someone who radiates godliness and goodness just by being the person he or she is.

"Wait and "watch" go together like twins who mirror each other imperfectly and do not think, act or feel exactly alike.

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To *wait* is to live believing that God is in charge, not I; to trust that God is leading me where God wants me to be, whether I realize it or not. Waiting is an acknowledgment that things happen in God's time, not necessarily in mine. To wait is to take time to remember what God has done for me in the past and to keep alive the trust in God's promise to dwell within those who have made room for God to act in their hearts and in their lives. To wait is to know that God still is my strength, no matter how tired, discouraged, or uncomprehending, fearful, or frustrated I may be or how chaotic the world around me may feel. To wait is to know that God will remain patient when I struggle to be.

To *watch* is to be attentive, to expect; to feel that something will happen, no matter how long it takes or how contrary it may be to my expectations. To watch is to stay awake to the possibilities, to believe in the latent potential in whatever circumstances in which I find myself. It means that when life hands me lemons, it's up to me to search for a knife, a juicer, a pitcher, water and sugar, and make lemonade out of them. When that is finished, to complete my lemonade project, I need to assemble some glasses and ice so that others and I can drink as much as we need to quench our thirst and be refreshed.

To *trust* is to have developed a habitual reliance on the God who dwells within. It is not guesswork, presumption or a reckless thinking that God will take care of everything without my cooperation. Rather, it is sure knowledge that if I take life decisions and situations to him first, I can rely on God to lead me to an answer in whatever way I can understand best. The peace that accompanies that answer will allow me to trust God and myself strongly enough to act on it.

Can I always live the motto of "'Wait for it; watch for it; trust it"? No, not yet, and probably not in this lifetime. I'm human, a woman who is inconsistent and needs to be called back, not just once, but multiple times, to the path along which God wants to lead me at this time in my life. However, the more often I'm true to that motto, the more the waiting and watching become habitual; and the more I realize how deep the peace is in trusting it and living it.

"What am I doing these days?" My poem's final verse says it all:

And so, I move in each day's energy,

weaving scheduled and unscheduled hours

into a fabric that will hold the pattern

of becoming a life fully lived and loved.

[Clare Boehmer is a member of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ. She is now retired after 60 years of active ministry, which included teaching English and computer science, serving as a librarian, and developing a computer center for teenage girls living in an emergency shelter.]

This story appears in the **Advent** feature series. View the full series.