

## ***“The meaning is the waiting”***

*(from a poem by R. S. Thomas, read at evening worship, CHRISM Reflective Weekend, Sutton Courtenay, November, 2001)*

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How difficult! Imagine saying that to an outpatient whose experience may be of waiting and more waiting:

- For an appointment to see the GP;
- For the tests at the hospital that the GP wants to organise;
- For the appointment to see the Consultant (not over 26 weeks, after 1 April 2002 – but 6 months is still a long wait if you are worried and anxious!);
- For the appointment in the clinic – sitting waiting with the others – all waiting.

### **“The meaning is in the waiting”.**

Imagine saying that to a patient on a long inpatient or day case waiting list (not over 15 months after 1 April 2002 – but still a long time):

- If you are waiting at home for the letter to drop through the door, hobbling around the house, struggling to do the shopping, hardly able to see the TV or the instructions on a packet of food;
- Waiting once you get to the hospital to see if there is a bed or last night’s emergency will mean you have to go home to wait again for another ‘phone call, another letter.....

### **“The meaning is in the waiting”.**

Imagine saying that to an elderly person in an acute hospital bed waiting for a place to come up in a Nursing Home, who says to their carer: “Am I a nuisance? Doesn’t anyone want me any longer? Can I afford it? What about my home?” .....

### **“The meaning is in the waiting”.**

Imagine saying that to someone watching a close relative or friend slip away mentally and physically – slowly, almost imperceptibly – “the mind’s cession of its kingdom”.

### **“The meaning ....” God, what meaning?**

And the answer is silence.

What meaning? What meaning? What meaning? What meaning in the suffering, the pain, the heartbreak, the anguish?

And it is difficult – there is no easy answer. But in the silence comes the still, small voice .....

- Know that you are loved and held;
- I am with you;
- Trust me.

And slowly, almost imperceptibly, the light begins to dawn ....

### **“The meaning is in the waiting”.**