

# ∞ Parents in Prayer ∞

This reflection is written for women, but can easily be applied to all of us.

Whenever we put on love, we become the person God intended us to be.

May these busy times be filled with less stress and more love ...

*So, here it is. Advent again. What are you giving up?  
Yes, I know it's the other purple liturgical season, the one with ringing bells and  
office parties and songs about flying reindeer and dancing snowmen. However,  
Advent is known in the Church as the "Little Lent."  
It's a time to fast and wait and prepare for the coming of the Lord.  
I think we should all give something up.*

*I vote for giving up on being perfect.  
This advent, let's all listen carefully to Anna Quindlen, who says, "The thing  
that is really hard, and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and  
beginning the work of becoming yourself."*

*Give up on the magazine-perfect meal plans and visions of completely  
coordinated handmade gift wrap.  
Give up on trying to make your house look like a Hallmark commercial.  
Give up on the expectation and the pressure you put on yourself to do it all –  
whatever "it all" is – perfectly.  
Instead, stop and ask the infant in the manger who you are,  
who He calls you to be.  
And then become that woman.*

*Are you a wife? Be a really good wife.  
I did a little experiment the other day. I listened to women talk to their  
husbands as I shopped. It was appalling.  
No one had a kind word to say.  
If you are a wife, then once upon a time, you stood in front of God  
and everybody and promised to cherish a man  
you loved so much you thought your heart would burst.  
Be that woman.  
Speak words of genuine appreciation. Offer a backrub.  
Stop your incessant activity and just sit and listen.  
Love him and become yourself.*

*Are you a mother? Be a really good mother.  
Children are generally overwhelmed with the constant noise  
and activity and stuff of this season.  
Rescue them.*

*Give in to the pleas for hot chocolate  
(even though it's a bother and a mess)  
and nestle in with a good book and read to them.  
These are the children you carried so tenderly home from the hospital  
when they were scarcely larger than a sack of sugar.  
Remember the woman you were that day?  
Your world stopped for them. Your world was them.  
Turn down the lights and light some candles.  
Stay up late together or linger in bed for an early morning snuggle.  
Give them the gift of a mother who truly sees them when she looks at them  
and truly hears them when they speak.  
Give them the gift of focused attention.  
Love them and become yourself.*

*No one in your house needs perfect.  
No one cares very much about your checklist  
and they care even less about the checklist you found online.  
They love you.*

*God created you with this family in mind.  
He entrusted the souls of those dear people to your care.*

*The Christmas of His design took place in a smelly cave,  
without a proper hostess.  
Are you going to try to one-up him with your plans for perfect or are you going  
to be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect?  
Maybe the perfect Advent and so, the perfect Christmas,  
begins in front of the Tabernacle.  
And maybe it begins with an honest question:  
who did he create me to be and how can I best do the work of becoming myself?*

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