

A Message to Adoptive Parents

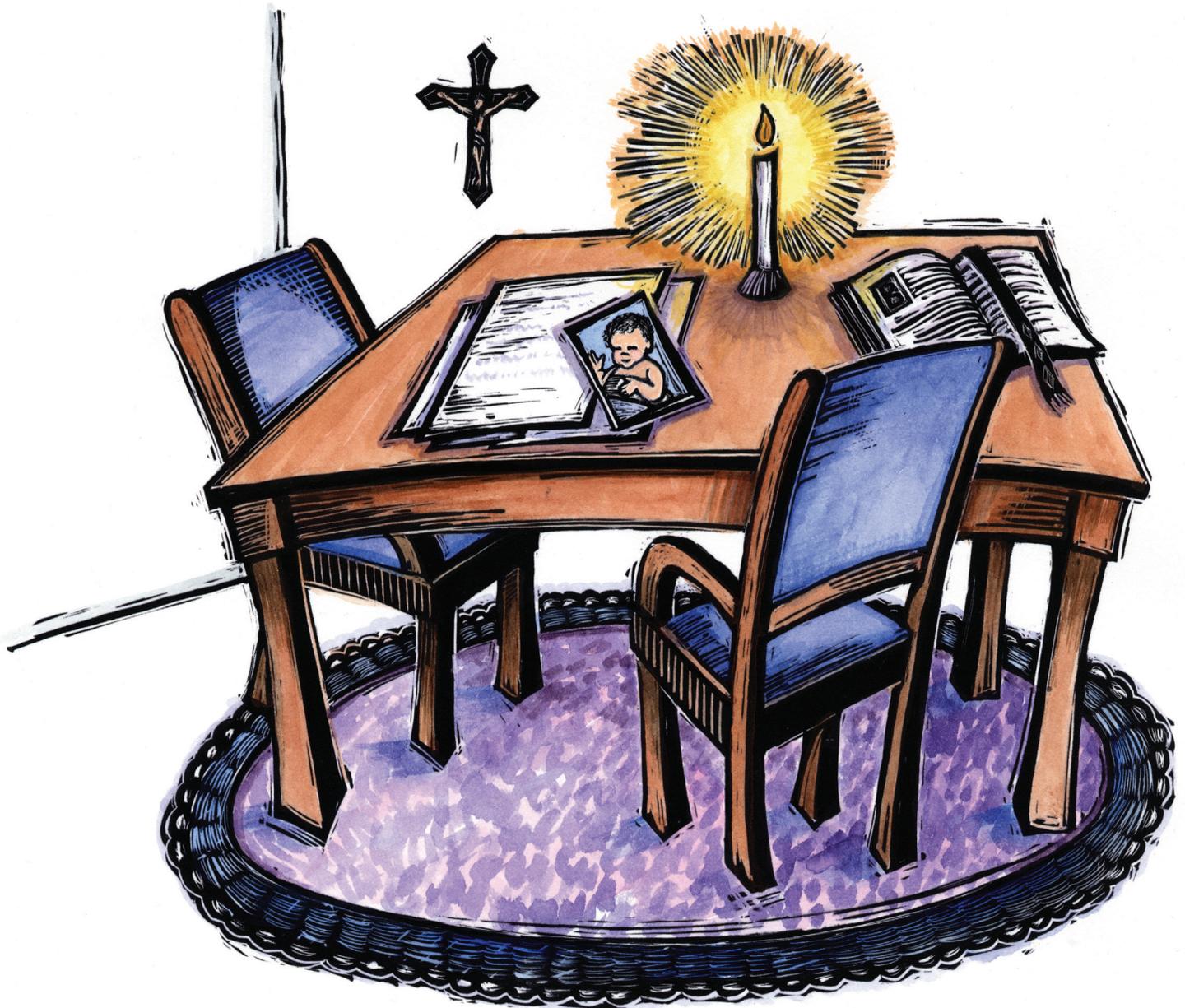
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“Please sit down.”

When this phrase is spoken to a pregnant mother, it offers a chance for her to rest some aching muscles and ease a tired back. Perhaps it means that a solicitous husband or caring friend will take over a task or bring a welcome cup of tea. But “Please sit down,” when spoken to expectant adoptive parents, is more likely to mean that yet another

interview is needed or that perhaps additional forms or certified copies will be required. Or maybe, just maybe, it means that there is a photograph to show, presented with the precious words “Here is the child we have for you.”

How long we’ve waited to hear these words! Can it be true? Dare we believe? “Here is the child we have for you.”



The process of adoption calls forth a leap of faith that brings not only new life to the family but also renewed hope and, often, light to dispel an extended darkness. The months and years of waiting at last are fulfilled. Yet always there is the need for more “waiting,” for the watchfulness that is at once alert and yet still.

This watchful waiting often brings with it the deep desire to prepare a heartfelt welcome for the child who is to be ours. We focus the energy of our anticipation on preparing our home and a special space for the child within it. Meanwhile, we may continue to amass piles of documents, home studies, and perhaps immigration files.

Through Isaiah the prophet, the Lord promises, “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength” (Isaiah 30:15). As we busy ourselves with the seemingly endless details that adoption requires—flight arrangements or other transportation plans, food and clothing supplies, appointments with the pediatrician—we need to take time to sit down and listen.

This child who will be ours has already experienced many significant moments in his or her short life and will have many more before we see each other face to face. What information is available about the child right now? How will these “moments” the child is experiencing before we meet affect him or her—and us—in years to come?



An adopted child, like any child, is both a gift and a challenge. Brokenness is part of every adopted child’s life. Every adoption necessarily begins with a relationship that is, to some extent, broken.

Embracing this reality will be an ongoing process for everyone involved.

Preparing the welcome for this child into our family will require not only the work of our hands and the opening of our arms; it will require the opening of our hearts as well. The euphoric hope of soon embracing our child is balanced by the awareness of our own brokenness and the recognition of our need for prayer.

“As they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he was saying” (Luke 10:38–39). In the same way that Mary sat down to listen at the feet of Jesus, we listen to Jesus, who is present within us. We listen to the life of this child whom God has prepared for us. We listen to the deep needs of this child, recognizing his or her need to be cuddled and loved as “part” of us, yet also as “apart” from us, a child who comes to us with his or her own history and a life outside of ours. In this deep preparation, we work, we pray, and we rejoice! Psalm 100 bids us to “make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness . . . It is he that made us, and we are his.”

“Please sit down.”

