

Joy

We ask God for many things, for world peace, for health for a loved one, for a promotion at work, for many things, which, we think, will make our lives better. God has promised that our prayers will be answered. But we often don't get that better job, our loved one dies, and world peace seems farther away than ever. Unhappiness increases around us.

But God does not promise happiness, the possession of things that make us contented. God gives us what we need when we pray. We get the unsettled spirit which leads us to seek out another company for which to work, or perhaps another, more fulfilling career entirely. We are filled with a sense of peace in spite of our loss as our loved one's suffering ends. And, most importantly, we are changed as we pray for peace. We become someone who truly values peace, filled with a willingness to struggle to work toward it.

As we continue to pray, we become filled with a light, a sense of God's love filling us in response. One day, that sense becomes joy, the light of God's presence residing in our hearts. Joy is much better than happiness. Happiness is a state of having, joy is a state of being. As we continue to allow God's love to transform us, joy becomes a habit. A habit which allows us to be assured of God's love in the midst of unemployment, in the midst of deep bereavement, in the midst of devastating war. This joy is a taste of the promise of the resurrection which God has given to us, a promise much more valuable than even world peace. A promise that is given to all along with the gift of life itself.

Joy is what provides light in whatever valley of the shadow of death we might find ourselves traveling. God did not promise we would never travel in that valley, but God does promise a light to lead us out again. When we arrive on the other side, we are not the same person as when we started. We carry the light dancing within ourselves.



From *Dancing into Joy: a Spiraling Easter Dance*, DewSpirit Publishing, PO Box 1208, Dickinson, ND 58602

www.DewSpirit.com

Copyright © 2006 M. Kathleen Chesnut