

Third Sunday of Advent Reflection by Sr. Kathleen Angel, CDP



"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near." The Third Sunday is the Sunday of Joy.

Joy is an all-encompassing fruit of the Spirit. Joy is so much more than happiness. It is peace, contentment, restfulness and the fulfillment of God's kingdom within us. In these days, we certainly need this precious fruit.

One of the most beautiful, largely unknown National Parks is Theodore Roosevelt in Western North Dakota. Usually it is a semi-arid and somewhat desolate land of stark natural beauty, similar to the "desert and parched land" of the First Reading. Following a flooding rain, the desert blooms with breathtaking beauty. The plants in these habitats are programmed to burst forth following such rains. The seeds' coats need to be cracked by being tumbled over coarse soil because they contain toxins that prevent germination until they are soaked in water. The life cycle of the plants is short. The seeds germinate, the plant develops, blooms and produces seeds in a very short period, all while the soil is still moist following the rain. Did you know the seed does not become the plant? Rather it actually contains a plant that is programmed to grow under the right conditions.

Ron Rolheiser, OMI, in one of his weekly reflections reminds us of the words of Teilhard de Chardin who said, there is only one worthwhile joy, the feeling you get from cooperating rightfully within the big picture of things, from taking our place within the great cosmic jigsaw puzzle. Joy and meaning come from being one tiny piece within the overall progress of the universe, nothing more and nothing less.

Our joy comes from living the internal programming gifted to us from our Provident Creator.

