



Pastoral Update—September 18, 2020

Joy Incarnate

I have said these things so that my joy may be in you... John 15:11

For Joy

by Jan Richardson, *Circle of Grace*, 2015

*You can prepare
but still
it will come to you
by surprise
crossing through your doorway
calling your name in greeting
turning like a child
who quickens suddenly
within you
it will astonish you
how wide your heart
will open
in welcome
for the joy
that finds you
so ready
and still so
unprepared.*



Have you ever noticed a person's face when people are singing *Happy Birthday* to them?! It is a moment of pure **Joy!** The birthday cakes I bake for my family are treasured signs of joy, because soon the glow of the candles will light up their faces in a surprising way. This intimate, almost ethereal moment, embodies the joy of the Lord in us. It is a sign of the joy Jesus speaks of to the disciples. It lights us up from the inside and shines in our eyes to the world in a special moment of knowing we are deeply loved.

The Spirit fills us with this joy because God loves us. It's a joy that can light up the darkest rooms and places. It can light up the darkness within, even if for brief moments, sparking hope. This joy abides in the most difficult times not materializing as "happiness," but deep peace and hope. This joy allows us to rest in the Lord knowing our hearts are filled with holy love. This joy allows us to be whole even when we hurt from the painful, broken pieces within us, because they are wrapped in God's mercy and love.

This is joy incarnate. It emanates from the Word incarnate, Jesus Christ, as a gift of grace embraced by faith. No one can take it from you. It is in our hearts waiting to surprise us even when you do not feel it. May joy heal your heart and your spirit in these most trying of times. May joy embrace you, shine from within you, and glow upon all who encounter you. Amen.

Pastor Andrea

P.S. REOPENING UPDATE: Nothing will give me more joy than when we can gather in-person once again. We are getting closer! The DCLC Reopening Team is working very hard to organize our plan and make preparations. Watch for details coming soon!