

btw... is the acronym for "by the Way (Jesus)." It sets the tone for the current issue.



And we *know*  
that in all things  
*God* works for  
the *good* of  
those who  
*love* him, who  
have been called  
according to  
his *purpose*.

Romans 8:28

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\*"Joy Is Like the Rain" words and music by Sister Miriam Therese Winter. ©1965 by Medical Mission Sisters, Philadelphia, PA, Vanguard Music Corp.

# Joy is Like the Rain

by Anita Stohs

The delivery room mood was upbeat before my daughter was born but changed abruptly at her birth. She was placed momentarily in my arms and then whisked away for examination. The happy chatter of the delivery room staff stopped, and silence descended over the staff.

My husband had gone back home to get grandparents, so I was alone in the recovery room when the new baby, to be named Miriam, was brought in for me to see. As I looked down at her, I suddenly saw what had caused the delivery room staff to become so quiet at her birth. Miriam had Down syndrome. A visit from our pediatrician confirmed my suspicions.

Because her heart had briefly stopped beating, Miriam was soon taken away for monitoring. On the wall of the recovery room was the picture of a smiling little girl with spring flowers in her hand, looking much like the dream child I had imagined this child would be.

A favorite Bible study song at that time was "Joy Is Like the Rain."\* On that cold day in early October, it was snow not rain that hit against the window, as the initial joy at my daughter's birth turned into uncertainty about her future. In the midst of this unexpected storm of life, it was to Jesus that my husband and I turned for help at that time. Our comfort was in knowing that Jesus was "in the boat" with us, holding us in His loving arms, as He continued to do during the years to come.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose* (Romans 8:28) are words of Scripture that come to my mind when I think of Miriam. God does not cause disability — that is a part of the fallen creation — but He can turn what goes wrong in this world to good. He can bring joy from sadness and, in the process, bring us to a stronger faith in Him.

Children with Down syndrome have an extra chromosome, and parents of such children sometimes talk about that extra chromosome being love. With the extra chromosome also comes an extra helping of joy in small things. "Joy, joy, joy ... heart" was how Mimi (the name her older brother called her when he could not say Miriam) sang a favorite preschool song, a reminder of the joy of faith that still lives in her heart, a gift of grace given through Baptism. Miss Giggles, one of Mimi's other nicknames, does just that when she sees or hears something she likes. She also giggles after festive church services and sometimes when she comes back from Communion.

Raising a child with a disability is not always sunny and storm-free — kids with Downs get the same kinds of medical illnesses and complications that others get, with a few more added to the mix. Mimi also has the ability to become, as every parent of a child with Downs knows only too well, an unmovable object if she does not want to do something.

"Bit by bit the river grows, 'til all at once it overflows." Like an overflowing river, God's joy floods our life in unexpected ways, with Miriam continuing to bring ongoing lessons in compassion, patience, and joy in simple things. We live each day in the joy of knowing that our Lord is ever with us, leading us with love and grace to the eternal joy of heaven. **Q**