

## **Finding Hope in the Desert**

By Sr. Susan Emmerich, ASCJ

I love Advent—most of the time! The thought of quiet reflection and hope-filled longing seems so right. Printed and digital Christmas cards begin to arrive with lovely images of a silent, holy night. Isaiah promises that “the desert and the parched land will exult, the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song.”

And then I open my eyes and my ears to current realities of tragedy and grief, of illness and isolation, of upheaval and distress. The darkness threatens to claim victory, but again “a voice cries out: in the desert prepare the way of the Lord!...Here is your God!”

The darkness, the desert are the necessary prelude to the coming of my God, a part of the journey that brings me to God and God to me. Hidden in the unexplained, the unexplainable is the seed of the wondrous, the wonderful, the awesomeness of God with us—Emmanuel.

I am learning to love Advent all of the time!