

Spring Prayer Reflection



What is hope? In today's culture, *hope* often expresses wishful thinking. The Old Testament verb translates hope is *qawa* meaning "to trust and wait expectantly." In the New Testament, hope is invested in and focused on someone—the person of Jesus. Biblical hope is not vain or fanciful thinking. Instead, it rests in the sure and confident expectation that God, who sent his Son to be with us, will meet all our needs both in the present and for all of eternity. Hope begins then, with our faith in Jesus and the knowledge that he has saved us for eternal life and this hope, transforms our entire approach toward life.

Hope is difficult to understand: it is "the most humble of virtues that cannot be seen." It is a virtue that we have to work at every day, remembering that we have the security, that it is the Spirit of God, who works with us in all things. It is not easy to live in hope, yet it should be the air that a Christian breathes. Without hope, one cannot walk, one cannot go on because one does not know where to go.

Pope Francis Reflects on Hope

"We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty, by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and a far-sighted vision," 2021.

"We must restore hope, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace. We will never be disillusioned or lose our way if we are guided by God."

What beliefs about God... about life... sustain your hope?

What experiences have you had which affirm your beliefs?

Light a prayer candle
Sit in the presence of God
Come to a gentle silence.

God of hope,
You lead me on life's journey
as I am present in your name,
Open my ears to hear Your voice.
Open my hands to Your work.
And open my heart to Your Spirit.

Amen



Scripture
A reading from the Gospel of Luke 7:11-17

Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and the disciples and a large crowd accompanied him. As Jesus approached the gate of the town, a dead body was being carried out – the only son of a widowed mother. A considerable crowd of townspeople were with her. Jesus was moved with pity upon seeing her and said, “Don’t cry.”

Then Jesus stepped forward and touched the coffin; at this, the bearers halted. Jesus said, “Young man, get up.”

The dead youth sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Fear seized them all, and they began to praise God.

“A great prophet has risen among us,” they said, and “God has truly visited us.” This was the report that spread about Jesus throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

The Word of the Lord.

Reflection

- What word or phrase resonates with you?
- Recall a time in your life when you, like the widow, have been afraid, hopeless and in need of Christ's presence?
- How do you open your heart to Jesus' compassion?
- In the fullness of faith, what gift of hope do you too take from this reading?

Responding

God of hope and love, hear our prayer.

We pray for strength to be people of hope, spreading your word of love among all people.

God of hope and love, hear our prayer.

We pray with compassion and care for those in need of God's healing.

God of hope and love, hear our prayer.

We pray for the faith, to be people who bring healing to wounded world.

God of hope and love, hear our prayer.

Be encouraged!
Hope was born in a manger,
Died on a cross,
And rose again that we might have life to the full.
We live in eager anticipation as we serve one another and
share in the Kingdom of God.

Inspiration from St Mary of the Cross

Be calm and full of hope 1871

Hope in God who has been so good to us 1898

I am full of hope in God who has been so good to us all. 1898

Keep your hope and trust and confidence in the goodness of God. 1880

Hope...

Encourages us to our perspectives. It has a way of getting us through, whatever difficulties we are facing.

Encourages us to live with bold purpose.

Encourages us to take a different approach to suffering.

Encourages us to live with intention. We are created in the image of God with unique gifts and talents.

Encourages us, because of our faith, with Jesus by our side, nothing can harm us – no matter what the threat. Pandemics, illness, and even death cannot undo what Jesus did for us on the Cross.

Psalm 71:14

As for me, I will always have hope. I will praise you more and more.

Prayer

God of hope,
You whose graceful presence
Pervades our world,
Make us people of hope and imagination
Who are committed to making
A more just and harmonious world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus who
shares humanity with us,
and the Spirit
who compels us to justice.

Amen

(Josephite Prayer Book Volume 1)

