

## Hope the Anchor of Life

Hope is the distinguishing mark of the Christian life, a gift from God which provides us with an anchor of strength. This parish retreat will reflect upon the theological virtue of hope and ways to call upon its strength in our daily life.

Catholicism of the Catholic Church #1817 “Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of Heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 8:18-25 “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.”

1 Peter 1:18-21 “Realize that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the Precious Blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb. He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Psalm 72:5-6 “You are my hope, Lord; my trust, God from my youth. On you I depend since birth; from my mother’s womb you are my strength; my hope in your never wavers.”

1 Corinthians 15:12,13, 19-20 “Tell me, if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how is it that some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, Christ himself has not been raised. If our hopes in Christ are limited to this life only, we are the most pitiable of people. But as it is, Christ is now raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

### Questions for Reflection

Where are the dark places of your world, in your home, at work, in relationships; those areas that need the Light of Christ? How can you be a messenger of hope? 1 Peter 3:15 “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.”

Is there a wound from the past that needs healing? Let God speak to you about that wound and make a choice to forgive. Is there a sacred wound in your life that God has used as a gift of healing and grace in the life of another person?

How can you begin to cultivate the gift of hope in your life? Do something from scratch...baking, wash the car with hose and sponge, paint a picture, etc. Ponder the gift of beauty found in art, music, or nature. Allow God to speak to you through this gift of beauty.



## Quotes from Pope Francis taken from his Urbi et Orbi Blessings

Jesus' cross, said Pope Francis, is the anchor that has saved us, the rudder that has redeemed us, and our hope, because "by His cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from His redeeming love." So, we embrace His cross in the hardships of the present time and make room in our hearts "for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring." Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope." (March 27, 2020)

In this Easter night, the Church's voice rings out: "Christ, my hope, has arisen!" This is a different "contagion," a message transmitted from heart to heart—for every human heart awaits this Good News. It is the contagion of hope: "Christ, my hope, is risen!" This is no magic formula that makes problems vanish. It is a victory of love over the root of evil. (April 12, 2020)

The Risen Lord is also the Crucified One, not someone else. In his glorious body he bears indelible wounds: wounds that have become windows of hope. Let us turn our gaze to him that he may heal the wounds of an afflicted humanity. (April 12, 2020)

**Keeping the Virtue of Hope Strong.** The virtue of hope is a gift of the Holy Spirit and given to each of us through God's covenant of love. Do we use the gift, or do we allow it to be dormant? The following checklist offers some helpful ways to keep the virtue of hope strong in your life.

### A Checklist of Hope

- Cherish memories and the power of imagination. They help us stay in touch with God's faithfulness and the dream God has placed in our heart which shapes how you and I choose to live.
- Nurture a healthy awareness of yourself as a child of God. Remember and celebrate that you are created in the image and likeness of God.
- See the cross as a gift to be embraced and appreciated. As in the experience childbirth, God is transforming your suffering into joy.
- Tend to a healthy spiritual life. Spirituality is about God's desire for us and what you and I do with this tug and pull we feel from God.
- Appropriately respond to fear. Live in the truth that you are redeemed in the Blood of Christ and that nothing can separate us from God's love.
- Choose to live in an environment of patience. This involves an active, attentive posture to life; staying with and living through whatever is before you with open ears, eyes, hands, and heart.
- Enter into the practice of simplicity. Find God in the most common of activities and experiences.
- Surround yourself with beauty which puts you in touch with the ultimate beauty which is found in Jesus Christ.
- Spend time in relationships that form community. Your heart expands in love as you reach out to others. It helps you realize that you are part of a much bigger mystery; you do not have to carry your burdens alone.

Fr. Angelo Anthony, C.P.P.S.



## Hope the Anchor of Life Activities

What is hope?

Faith, hope and love are gifts flowing from the Father's love for us. We cannot create them but we can receive them as gifts given to us to help us on our journey towards God. We believe and trust that God will take care of us and the people and events in our lives.

- Hope has to do with things that seem impossible or difficult.
- Hope sustains us when we feel discouraged.
- Hope opens us up to future blessings on earth and the gifts of eternal life in heaven.

Ways to celebrate and grow in hope:

- Prayer: Prayer praises God and asks for God's help in our time of need.
- Art: Creating and looking at works of art create in us an appreciating of grace and beauty.
- Music: Music moves our hearts, minds and muscles into the spiritual realm.
- Nature: The never-ending cycles of growth, death and rebirth remind us of God's constant action in our lives.

Symbols of Hope:

- Anchor
- Rainbow
- Sunflower
- Butterfly

Activities for increasing hope:

- Tell a story about a time when you were faced with a difficult or seemingly impossible task.
  - o What was it
  - o How did you feel?
  - o How did it work out?
- Make a collage.
  - o Gather up your art supplies, magazines and a large piece of paper. Draw, paint and cut out and paste pictures of things that give you hope.
- Pick out a person or group that you would like to help.
  - o Pray for them.
  - o Send a card, letter or donate food, money or whatever that they may need.
- Choose a person, biblical character or saint who represents hope.
  - o What makes them so hopeful?
  - o What do they do when they feel discouraged?
- Make a goal and plan activities that will encourage you to meet that goal as a way of positively planning for the future.
- Be grateful for what is and what God has done in the past. Nothing increases hope like gratitude.
- Continue in faith, hope and love.

**“Hope is faith standing on its tiptoes.”**

