



PEOPLE OF HOPE

Redemption is offered to us in the sense that we have been given hope, trustworthy hope, by virtue of which we can face our present: the present, even if it is arduous, can be lived and accepted if it leads towards a goal, if we can be sure of the goal, and if this goal is great enough to justify the effort of the journey.

- Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi #1

SUGGESTED SETTING: A live plant or plants, another pot with soil, and some seeds scattered around on the table.

LEADER: God of our hope, God of our dreaming – you fill us with hope calling us to a deeper hope, to dream dreams still undreamed, and visions still becoming.

ALL: Awaken us to a brighter vision where we may be given the blessing to bring healing, peace and hope to others. We ask this in faith. Amen.

SONG: The God of All Grace (by: Rickey Manalo, CSP) Obtain music on You Tube.

CHORUS:

The God of all grace has blessed us this day,
All of creation joins us in praise;
Lifting our voices, lifting our hearts,
To the glory of God forever!

God of power and might, come into our presence this day,
Strengthen us now with a spirit of faith, we gather in your name. **(CHORUS)**

God of mercy and truth, who brings from night into day,
Nourish our lives with a spirit of hope and shield us from all fear. **(CHORUS)**

God of wondrous love, compassion and love are yours,
Fill our hearts with a spirit of love, the joy we find in you. **(CHORUS)**

ALL: Ps 33: 20-22

Our soul waits for the Lord, who is our help and shield. For in God our hearts rejoice; in your holy name we trust. May your kindness, Lord, be upon us; we have put our HOPE in you.

1ST READING: Romans 8, 24 – 25

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 patient endurance.

2nd READING: Jeremiah 29, 11

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

3rd READING: Jon Sobrino

“Hope begins where hope begins.” Jon Sobrino’s words seem to express that great mystery at the core of human freedom and responsibility, that mystery we name hope. Without it we do not live. Indeed, wherever there is life there is hope. Traces of it are found each time we take the next step. Because of its light, we turn the pages and we are able to look from one moment to the next. It looks to a future that can come only as a gift. It begins where it begins. And hope, the deep-down kind, has no end. It is like faith. It is no less than love.

4th READING: Pope John Paul II, June, 2003

The contribution of the lay faithful to the life of the church is essential: they have an irreplaceable role in the proclamation and the service of the Gospel of hope, since “through them the Church of Christ is made present in the various sectors of the world, as a sign and source of hope and love.”

REFLECTION and SHARING:

What words of hope does Jesus speak to me personally?

Ponder where you need to cultivate hope in your own heart.

What are your hopes that you carry into the future?

What is my responsibility as an Associate to speak hope to others?

LEADER: From Vaclav Havel's, *Disturbing the Peace*

Either we have hope within us or we don't. It is a dimension of the soul, and it is not particularly dependent upon some observation of the world. It is an orientation of the spirit, and of the heart. It transcends the world that is immediately experienced and is anchored somewhere beyond horizons. Hope is a deep and powerful sense and it is not the same as joy that things are going well or the willingness to invest in opportunities which are obviously headed for success. But rather, it is an ability to work for something because you believe in it. Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that it makes sense regardless of results. It is hope, above all, which gives us the strength to live and to continually try new things.

RESPONSE: Repeat after each statement

Creator God, increase our hope.

- Hope is the very condition for the possibility of believing and loving.

- Hope is the capacity in each one of us that is open to God's truth and love.
- Hope is the dynamism that carries us from now to then, inclining us to look from the present to the future, from what is still to come, and on to what might be.
- Hope is the driving force of all human initiative, the undercurrent of all human activity. It looks for the coming of the new, that which has never been before.

PRAYER:

ALL: Creator God, help us to understand more deeply this mysterious reality called "hope," which comes only as a gift from you. Continue to stir up hope in our hearts. May hope find a home in us and room to grow so that our life may speak of one long season of hope. We pray in confidence. Amen

CLOSING: Repeat Song – God of All Grace

