



LIVING WITH HOPE

LEADER: God of our hope;

ALL: Be present with us today and fill us with Your hope.

LEADER: God of our dreams;

ALL: Call us to deeper hope, to dreams still undreamed and visions still becoming.

LEADER: Awaken us to a deeper way of seeing;

All: Awaken within us a brighter vision to see how we can be a hopeful people.

SONG: Imagine – by John Lennon (YouTube)

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people living for today

Imagine there's no countries
It's isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people living life in peace, you

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people sharing all the world, you

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one.

LEADER: "Hope begins where hope begins." (Jon Sobrino)

READER 1:

Without hope in our lives, how do we live? Sobrino's words seem to express that great mystery at the core of human freedom and responsibility, the mystery we name hope. Wherever there is life there is hope! Traces of it are found each time we take the next step. Because of its light, we are able to look from one moment to the next. It looks to the future that can only come 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.

READER 2: Romans 8 24 – 25

For in hope we are 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.

REFLECT:

What words of hope does Jesus speak to me?
How do my actions/speech reflect of hope to others?

How does the Associate Program speak of hope to others?

LEADER:

Creator God, we ask that you increase our hope, opening our hearts to Your truth and love.

ALL:

May our hope help us to look from the present into the future, from what is to what is still to come. Let us not be held back by fear or doubt. With Your grace may we use hope as the driving force to dream, and to use our initiative and creativity for Your good.

READER 3: Ps. 33 20-22

Our soul waits for the Lord, who is our help and our 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.

READER 4: Jeremiah 29: 11 & Peter 3: 14-15

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.

Have no fear, nor be troubled, but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you.

REFLECT:

How do I create and nurture hope in my life?

THINGS YOU MAY CONSIDER: Taken from an article “8 Ways to Increase Hope”
by Naomi Drew, M.A.

Be Kind to Yourself – Think about what you need most and do it. Small moments accumulate and transform the texture of our days.

Create a Daily 5-Minute Silence Ritual – Light a candle and pray, mediate or reflect. This may be the one time during the day that you feel connected to your soul.

Curtail Your Intake of News – Over-saturation of news right now can be detrimental to emotional health. Anything you miss in one day will be here tomorrow.

Treat Each Day Like a Precious Gift – Look for people and things to appreciate. What if today was the last day of your life?

Take a Break – Every morning, afternoon and night, take a 30-second break to look at the sky, breathe deeply and offer thanks. Let the sky be the touchstone to hope.

Express Love Tangibly – Hugs, words, acts of kindness.....be indiscriminately generous with them all. It is comforting to the giver and the receiver of each act.

Daily Affirmation – Say this affirmation daily and see where it leads you: “I am the key to peace and finding hope.”

Make a Difference – Reach out beyond your normal scope. Each time we make a difference in the lives of others, we create hope in ourselves. We are each a source of transformation.

DISCUSS/SHARE WITH ONE ANOTHER:

SONG: Living With Hope – by Danny Gokey (YouTube)

I've been running through the rain
That I thought would never end
Trying to make it on faith
In a struggle against the wind
I've seen the dark and broken places
But I know in my soul
No matter how bad it gets
I'll be alright

CHORUS:

There's hope in front of me
There's a light, I see it
There's a hand still holding me
Even though I don't believe it
I might be down but I'm not dead
There's better days still up ahead
Even after all I've seen
There's hope in front of me

There's a place at the end of the storm
You finally find
Where the hurt and the tears and the pain
All fall behind

You open up your eyes and up ahead
There's a big sun shining
Right then and there you realize
You'll be alright **CHORUS**

There's still hope burning
I can feel it rising through the night
And my world's still turning

I can feel your love here by my side
You're my hope
You're the light, I still see it
Your hands are holding me
Even when I don't believe it
I've got to believe
I still have hope
You are my hope

LEADER: Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi #1

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

ALL:

Let us celebrate the gift of hope. We ask you, Lord to help us cultivate and nurture the seeds of hope no matter how fragile a seedling it may be. We believe You call us to be signs of hope in today's world. We trust in You to guide us as we turn towards building a Kingdom of God in the hope and joy that is grounded in our faith.

Amen