



*“Hope is the thing with feathers
that perches on the soul
and sings a tune without words
and never stops at all.”*

Emily Dickenson

Hope is ephemeral

Knowable in its absence

Confident in its expectation that God will deliver on God’s promises

Different from optimism

Paul Pryser, a noted psychologist, advises that hope is not a short-term intervention but a way of life. Optimism is the short-term intervention, that believes the world is changing for the better while hope is the belief that we have within us the ability to make the world a better place. It is the consistent belief that we can make a difference. However, hope is; like a muscle in that it has to be worked at and acknowledges our dependency on God.

Hope is born in us from infancy and is dependent on a trustful attachment to our primary caregivers as young children. It is reinforced in our lives through the belief others have in us and the encouragement we are given to do our best regardless of the outcome. The good news is that hope is catching and therefore it is necessary to remind one another to live in a hopeful manner every day. In essence it is a communal virtue.

It is closely aligned with charity and love. Our lives as Christians bear hopeful witness to a world sorely in need of that hope. Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical, *Spe Salvi*, states “that through prayer we undergo those purifications by which we become open to God and are prepared for that service of our fellow human beings. We become capable of great hope and thus become ministers of hope for one another.” We build hope through our attachments to one another, by setting attainable goals for ourselves, having a mission in life, developing healthy coping mechanisms and last but certainly not least, by prayer.

In this Eastertide, the gospel readings provide enough illustrations of hope to last us a lifetime. In each of those gospel stories the disciples are surrounded by others who have hope in the mission of Christ and together they encourage and spur each other on. Let us be that for each other, bearers of hope that will light up our world.

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