



PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

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Hoping against Hope

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“Hope open new horizons, making us capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable.”

-Pope Francis

Were you amazed when the Berlin Wall came down? Me too. It was beyond my wildest dreams. No war, no fighting...not a shot fired. People just came and started to knock that wall down, and the soldiers guarding it did nothing to stop them. I think this is what Pope Francis means.

Hoping when that little inner voice says we are crazy is not easy. Poor Abraham waited and waited. Still no child as God promised. But in due time that child came. Recently our liturgy reminded us, “Write down the vision clearly...for the vision still has its time...it presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint; wait for it, it will surely come, it will not be late.” (Habakkuk 2:2-4) Our difficulty is like Abraham’s. When, O Lord? Yet the timing will be perfect. God is faithful, and so we wait. We live in hope.

The Christophers describe what hope really looks like: “Hope looks for the good in people instead of harping on the worst. Hope opens doors where despair closes them. Hope discovers what can be done instead of grumbling about what cannot.”

Hope

A final word on hope from the delightful poet, Charles Peguy:

I am, God says, Master of three virtues.

Faith is a faithful spouse.

Charity is a mother burning with devotion.

But hope is a very small girl.

I am, God says, Master of three virtues.

Charity is she who extends herself over the centuries.

But my little hope is the one who each morning

Says Good Day to us.

And so we keep company with one another, and in hope wish one another Good day...

Special thanks to S. Janet Ackerman for these reflections.

November 1 – Rev 7:2-4; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Mt 5:1-12a

The Gospel of Matthew, Dominic's favorite, lays out a challenging vision for life and the promise of joy that comes with living these beatitudes. Everything and everyone belong, are connected and can be in right relationship if we are willing to examine our dispositions, attitudes and actions. Our poverty of spirit can help us ask ourselves, as John did in the first reading, what our vision is of life on our planet, and how that reflects the vision of the kingdom. We are, indeed, BLESSED when we know we are the beloved (2nd reading) and recognize our poverty of spirit. We carry the hope of seeing God as God truly is.

November 3 – Wis 11:22-12:2; 2 Thes 1:11-12:2; Lk 19:1-10

The story of Zacchaeus raises many questions: How am I Zacchaeus, Jesus, the crowd? How intensely do I desire to see Jesus? What in my short spiritual stature prevents me from seeing Jesus in those on the fringe of our society? Zacchaeus gave half of his possessions to the poor ... And we? Take a close look at the two words Jesus uses: "must" and "today." There is a divine necessity in Jesus' preaching, as Wisdom tells us....you overlook people's sins ...why? That they may repent.



November 10 – 2 Mac 7:1-2,9-14; 2 Thes 2:16-3:5; Lk 20:27-38

In the Gospel and first reading today, we see the weaving of law regulating issue regarding life, death, and "the role of the brothers in legal matters." Jesus' disposition when faced with legal questions remained serene, joyful and non-argumentative. Let us pray for this disposition in the political climate of our time. When faced with both life and death, it is the love of God that keeps us eternally alive. The hope (Christ's return at the end of time) referred to at the end of the first reading is carried over to the beginning of the second reading from Thessalonians. The second reading ends in the same way as the Gospel, directing us to the love of our Living God.

November 17 – Mal 3:19-20a; 2 Thes 3:7-12; Lk 21:5-19

A prediction makes us "listen up." Jesus predicts no stone will be left upon another stone that will not be thrown down. These apocalyptic signs in the Gospel will be preceded by struggles with governments and families. Are we in the end times? Even in times of distress we can give witness to our faith, as the last line of the first reading tells us. "But for you who fear my name, there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays." When we do not receive signs and wonders, we are forced to walk by dark faith. How strong is your faith?

November 24 – 2 Sam 5:1-3; Col 1:12-20; Lk 23:35-43

At the close of the church year, we see Jesus as King of the Universe. How does this speak to you... the Chosen One? the Messiah? the King of the Jews? the One who saves? God, give us the faith of the criminal who hangs with Jesus and asks Jesus to re-member him. This great love we see in the second reading....so let yourself Be-Loved!