CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, November 6, 2022

Living Hope

Written by Bro. Silas Henderson, SDS

2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14
2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:5
Luke 20:27-38



"We are confident of you in the Lord that what we instruct you,
you are doing and will continue to do.
May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God
and to the endurance of Christ."

—2 Thessalonians 3:4-5

At the end of each liturgical year, the readings and prayers of the liturgy invite us to turn our gaze toward the future. That is certainly true in the readings for this Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, as Jesus offers us a glimpse of what the fullness of life will be like: "They can no longer die, for they are like angels; and they are the children of God" (Luke 20:36). But this sort of living for the future that the liturgy is inviting us to is hard work, which demands perseverance.

As we know, the demands of daily living can often be complex and all-consuming. When we begin to factor in the uncertainties and suffering that are all too common in our communities, nation, and world, it can be hard to do more than simply move on to the next task. And so, we might ask, how is living for the future possible when there are so many things about *today* pulling us in countless directions?

The answer, simple as it may seem, is *hope*.

For Christians, hope is more than a mere optimism that, at some point in the future, things will be "better," that current tensions or struggles will come to an end and life will be somehow different. For disciples of Jesus hope has a very different sensibility. This is because, for Christians, we don't simply hold our breath and suffer through until that moment of change arrives. Rather, we live the present moment to fullest — with all its blessings and challenges — confident that God is with us now, journeying into the future with us. This confidence, this hope, is based on our conviction that we believe in a God who keeps promises. As Pope Francis reflected in a 2017 General Audience, Christian hope is "A hope based on a promise that, from the human point of view, seems uncertain and unpredictable, but which never fails, not even in the face of death, when the One who promises is the God of the Resurrection and Life."

Even Jesus knew the stresses of daily life. Not only did he see first the struggles of his working-class parents and many families like his in Nazareth, but he also saw countless broken, struggling, and hopeless people in his travels and ministry. The gospels tell us that Jesus, himself, also grew tired and overwhelmed because of the many people who were constantly coming to him for a healing touch or blessing. And it is Jesus — both fully divine *and* fully human — who helps us to see what hope looks like: when the world was closing in, he stepped away, took time for prayer and to relish the closeness of his Father, and he returned to the mission the Father had entrusted to him, moving into his own future confident of the presence of the Father.

Prayer

A Prayer to God Present Everywhere in the World
O my God,
you are in heaven,
and you are there in all your immensity.
You are also in the world,
which is entirely permeated with you,
because it contains you —
or rather because you contain it.

O my God,
I believe that where I go I will find you
and that there is no place
which you do not honor with your presence.
Amen.

(Based on the writings of St. John Baptist de la Salle, taken from The New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book)

As we look toward the end of the Church year and to the fullness of time, when all of God's promises will be fulfilled, we are able to do so in hope because we recognize that God is with us here and now, even in the messiness of the present moment. Stand firm. Trust. Be confident that, beyond sadness, oppression, and even death, the last word will be the Lord's and, as Pope Francis reminded us, "it will be a word of mercy, of life and of peace." After all, the Holy Father concludes, "Whoever hopes, hopes to one day hear this word: 'Come, come to me, brother; come, come to me, sister, for all eternity."

— Bro. Silas Henderson, SDS