

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -*

*And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -*

*I've heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.*

Denise Levertov, a poet whose words also speak powerfully (I shared her poetry of the Annunciation in our Advent Art Class) also tells us of hope in her poem *For the New Year, 1981*:

I have a small grain of hope—
one small crystal that gleams
clear colors out of transparency.

I need more.

I break off a fragment
to send to you.

Please take
this grain of a grain of hope
so that mine won't shrink.

Please share your fragment
so that yours will grow.

Only so, by division,
will hope increase,
like a clump of irises, which will cease to flower
unless you distribute
the clustered roots, unlikely source—
clumsy and earth-covered—
of grace.

Friends, let us be people of hope sharing hope, as small a grain as we may possess. And may we always awaken each day looking for new joys and new possibilities, perhaps echoing this prayer from our Prayer Book taken from Paul's letter to the Romans,

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.