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S U P P L E M E N T



Christians, bearers and builders of hope among the peoples

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Pilgrims of hope is the theme of the Holy Year 2025. The pilgrim starts on his way hoping to reach a sacred place or move the people's heart. *"Every one knows what it is to hope . In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come"* (*Spes non confundit*, 1). The Christian, moved by the Spirit, is bearing a content which goes beyond his own frontiers, either personal, social and ecclesiastical, to move the heart and mind of each person he meets on his way. The jubille offers each Christian the opportunity to rekindle hope, based on his faith in God and on God's love for his brothers .

In his message for the World Day of Missions of October 19th 2024, Pope Francis insisted on the fact that the jubille *'may be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the "door" (cf Jn 10:7-9) of our salvation, whom the church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as "our hope"'* (1 Tim 1:1) (*Spes non confundit* n° 1).

In connection with these celebrations, the General Council has asked me to prepare a reflection on the Christians, bearers and builders of hope among the peoples. We are daily in contact with some lay faithful with whom we are sharing the spirituality of the Incarnation : religious and lay people drink at the same spring, and together we live the dynamism of the charism better (cf R of L,3). A bearer is the one who holds and carries something while moving, conveying the object from one place to another. We are called bearers of the good news of the Gospel in which we believe and to which we want to be faithful. A bearer is the one who knows how to unite appropriately various elements to realize a valuable and efficient work. We are all *"a sign proclaiming Jesus Christ"* (R of L 13). The rule of Life of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Betharram does not speak of Betharramites bearing useless weights or building disorderly. It proposes what is essential for St. Michaël Garicoïts: *"to*

reproduce and to manifest the impulse of the Heart of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, saying to his Father : ‘Ecce venio’ and surrendering Himself to all his wishes for the redemption of mankind” (R of L., 2). In a figurative meaning, the impulse is a sudden, spontaneous movement of the soul which expresses faith, trust, charity, passion and tenderness. Hope, fed by faith and nourished by charity, is the virtue of the movement forward towards a different and better future.

What must we do ? Revive our trust in God, to have at least an example of life, to give understandable signs of hope.

I - To revive Christian hope in prayer

The jubilee invites each one to be “a pilgrim of hope”. To walk in a world darkened by all kinds of everlasting violence is not cheering... To walk in life with indifferent fellow-travellers is disarming. Walking with Jesus, listening to him, interrogating him and interrogating ourselves, we feel our heart burn. Then, we will realize that hope is “an irreplaceable companion” of life.

- Hope, fed by faith, becomes a prayer... *“I waited, I waited for Yahweh, then he stooped to me and heard my cry for help”*. (Ps 40,1). The praying man exults for salvation, renews his trust in the Lord who goes on accomplishing marvels for the faithful. *“I rely, my whole being relies, Yahweh, on your promise”*. (Ps 130,5). The divine Word is a revelation of God to his elected, by whom he speaks to the whole people. God’s word, read, meditated, interiorized, ruminated, feeds our faith and supports hope in our concrete life.

- **Hope renews my relation to God.** *“How blessed is he who has Jacob’s God to help him, his hope is in Yahweh his God, (...) He keeps faith for ever, gives justice to the oppressed, gives food to the hungry . Yahweh sets prisoners free. Yahweh gives sight to the blind, lifts up those who are bowed down. Yahweh protects the stranger, he sustains the orphan and the widow. Yahweh loves the upright, but he frustrates the wicked”*. (Ps 145, 5-9). In God, we may have a total trust, for he is not only the author of creation, but he also takes care of each reality, exercising his kingdom with goodness and justice. He is chiefly serving the

categories on the fringe of society. (PRAY SILENTLY WITH PSALM 145).

- **Hope does not disappoint anyone !** *“On you I have relied since my birth, since my mother’s womb you have seen my portion, the constant theme of my praise” (Ps 70,6).* It is the prayer of an old person: reaching old age, he has no strength left. All this is made worse by the hostility of enemies who interpret his misfortunes as a sign God abandons him. The old person pours out his bitterness in front of God, reminding him of his life lived in faithfulness, trust, listening to the Word. His prayer is changed into expressing his hope to be able to go on praising God in the days which remain to him. Placing himself under the divine protection, the faithful will find salvation as well as liberation from the enemy and any danger. *“Yahweh my refuge ! And make Elyon your fortress” (Ps 90,9).*

- **Hope illuminates the dark moments of life.** Hope supports the persecuted innocent. *“Judge me, Yahweh, as my uprightness and my integrity deserve. Put an end to the malice of the wicked, make the upright stand firm , you who discern hearts and minds, God the upright. God is a shield that protects me, saving the honest of heart” (Ps 7, 8-10).* The interior experience of intimacy with God leads the psalmist to declare his trust in the fact that death shall not have the last word on him: *“Protect me, O God, in you is my refuge. To Yahweh say : you are my Lord, my happiness is in none of the sacred spirits of the earth”. (Ps 15, 1-2).* Before the liturgy, in a kind of exam oh his conscience, the praying man asks God to think of his moral integrity, and he hopes in his mercy: *“Yahweh, be my judge, I go on my way of innocence, my trust in Yahweh never wavers”. (Ps 26,1).* *“Taste and see that Yahweh is good. How blessed are those who take refuge in him”. (Ps 34,8).* *“Yahweh Sabaoth, blessed is he who trusts in you.” (Ps 84,12).* To hope is to trust the Most High’s protection. It overcomes fear, the dominant emotion which is released in front of a threat: *“Though an army pitch camp against me, my heart will not fear, though war break out against me, my trust will never be shaken. (...) For he hides me away under his roof on the day of evil, he folds me in the recesses of his tent, sets me high on a rock” (Ps 27,3-5).* *“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you, in God, whose word I praise, in God I put my trust and have no fear, what power has human strength over” (Ps 56, 3-4) .*

- **Hope overcomes fear.** The praying man is persecuted by his enemies with insistance.

However, above their malice, a prayer to God, full of trust, is rising. This prayer helps the praying man to hope in God's grace. *"But see how Yahweh watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his faithful love"* (Ps 33,18). It expresses his confidence in God's faithfulness. *"But I, like a flourishing olive tree in the house of God, put my trust in God's faithful love, for ever and ever"*. (Ps 52,8). Nothing, no one, shall be able to reject the praying man into panic and despair. The person who has set in God the firm anchoring of his hope will never be disappointed. Psalm 30 alternates the notes of imploration and the expressions of trust of a man praying in a difficult situation : perhaps a disease making him disgusting for his dearest persons, and the target of his opponents, as far as even excluding him from the cult. His thought goes towards Yahweh, the rock, the safe refuge, the powerful saviour; his complaint is replaced by the certainty to be heard, the invocation is replaced by a song of gratitude for his rehabilitation in front of men and for the new life he has obtained .

LET US MEDITATE THIS PSALM 30 SILENTLY, and let us propose it to the persons we meet who are ill, having lost confidence, excluded, not understood, anxious. God frees his elected from anguish, by widening his frontiers and opening new spaces of hope for them. (cf Ps 3)

- **Hope awakens the desire for God** and the temple among those who are exiled, far from Jerusalem, under the whip of the pagans' irony. He turns his heartbreaking memory towards God's house: *"Why be so downcast, why all these sighs ? Hope in God ! I will praise him still, my saviour, my God"* (Ps 41,5-6. 12 ; 42,5).

In the psalms, the praying man has no name, but we manage to know his state of mind, his social situation and his religious frustration. Besides the prayer to kindle hope, he also needs to meet people who have experienced that hope never disappoints.

II - Examples of lay people, bearers and builders of hope

In the Bible, we find characters of lay people who are, for us, a living example of hope. They are not bogged down in the cult of idols, they are consecrated to the cult

in the Temple, they are persons seduced by God and who let themselves be seduced. Let us ponder on two examples.

A) Abraham beleives and gives his trust : *“Though there seemed no hope, he hoped and beleived that he was to become father of many nations in fulfilment of the promise”* (Rm 4,18). During his audience of Wednesday december 28th 2016, Pope Francis reaffirmed: *“It is the capacity to go beyond human reasonings, wisdom and prudence of the world, beyond what is normally considered as good sense, to believe what is impossible . Hope opens new horizons, makes us able to dream what is not even imaginable. Hope makes us enter the darkness of an uncertain future to walk in the light. (...) It gives us so much strength to walk in life. And the moment comes, for Abraham too, of the despairing crisis. He trusted, he left his house, his land, his friends, everything. He started, he arrived in the land God had indicated to him, time has passed. (...) Time has elapsed but the son does not come. (...) In Abraham’s heart as well, reign the darkness of disappointment, of dejection, of difficulties to hope in something impossible (...) Abraham speaks to the Lord, but it is as if God, even if he is present and speaks to him, has now gone away, as if not keeping his word. (...) In spite of everything, Abraham goes on believing in God and hoping something may still happen. ‘Look up at the sky and count the stars if you can. Just so will your descendants be, he told him’. (Gn 15,5). His unique certainty is to trust God’s word and go on hoping”.*

B) Amos listens and speaks courageously. Seized by passion for the good of the humiliated, trampled people, he condemns an unjust society and an artificial religiosity. He presents himself to Israël and the nations with God’s words: *“Lord Yahweh says this”* (Am 3) inviting to a great exam of conscience. Amos curses with irony the hypocritical cult of Bethel and Galgala, religious tricks to cover a heap of sins. For the prophet, religion has no meaning if it lacks justice ; the cult is wizardry if it is not sustained by a social engagement for justice. The invitation: *“Listen”*... (Am 3-6) is aimed at giving back the cult its strength which makes the whole existence stronger. *“This is what Lord Yahweh showed me...”* (Am 7-4), a plumb line which hints to the distortions noted by the Lord in the social, religious building of the Hebrew nation. But the last word is not a curse: *“The days are coming – declares the Lord Yahweh – when I shall send a famine on the country, not hunger for food, no thirst for water, but*

famine for hearing Yahweh's words". (Am 8,11). Words which make David's kingdom resplendent, which will ensure a fertile land, which will guarantee the return of the people to its land, its vineyards, its towns. The pilgrim of hope is not walking alone, but with his people, towards happiness.

III - To be bearers and builders of hope for our environment

- **Christ is our hope !** Consecrated and lay people, we are all Christians, how do we share our announcement of the Gospel ? Do we wish to be the leaven and the visible signs of God in our history ? (cf. R L. 113).

- **Christ is our model !** Our life style is true or is it the contrary of a testimony when we take part in initiatives concerning human rights, protecting the environment, the quality of life, and the protection of the weakest ? (cf. RL. 116).

- Hope never deceives. The fields of our activity are the young people, the students, the families, the parishioners, the poor, the separated brothers and the believers of other religions. Are we prone to point at their limits, or are we ready to give them a hand to help them rise again, to accompany them with delicacy, comprehension and respect ? (Cf. RL 117-129).



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