



VITAL GRANDIN CHAPLAINCY

Edmonton Latin Mass Community

ARCHDIOCESE OF EDMONTON

Served by the Priests of the Fraternity of St. Peter (fssp)

18th Sunday after Pentecost

October 8th, 2017

St. Edmund's Parish ◇ 13120 - 116 Street NW Edmonton



Jesus heals the paralytic
Mosaic in Ravenna, Italy, 5-6th c.

But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, - then He said to the paralytic - Arise, take up your pallet and go to your house. And he arose, and went away to his house.

(Mt 9:5-7)

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*Give peace, O Lord, to those who have hoped in You...
Hear the prayers of Your servant, and of Your people Israel.*

Introit, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 36:18

The Virtue of Hope

God is the source and object of the faith, hope, and love we call the theological virtues. Because God is infinite, we will never be able fully to comprehend the habitual dispositions - or virtues - that lead to Him. Nevertheless, in the virtue of hope we find a great deal that speaks to us on a human level, making this virtue one of the more accessible.

The dictionary defines hope as "the feeling that what is wanted can be had, or that events will turn out for the best". We reasonably expect this definition to change somewhat as we apply it to our spiritual lives, and to those dispositions we call virtues, but Saint Thomas Aquinas' definition of hope remains extremely easy to grasp, "...a future good, difficult but possible to attain...by means of the divine assistance...on whose help it leans" (ST II-II, 17.1).

Saint Thomas also calls hope "a movement or stretching forth of the appetite towards an arduous good". If we think of the many things we long for, this physical image of "stretching" to achieve a good is one we can easily understand. Robert Browning describes this longing quite aptly when he writes, "Ah! But a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?" The effort we are willing to expend is proportionate to the good we seek. The "highest" good we hope for, of course, is everlasting happiness in God's presence. This is worth quite a stretch, indeed!

We cannot - or should not - wish anything other than this happiness, so the virtue of hope allows us to place the many good things that surround us in a proper order. Once we place our eternal happiness at the top-of-the-list, everything else should fall into place. Of course, this is not a step we can take all at once; even good habits take time to develop. Nevertheless, as we progress in the spiritual life, and our life with God emerges more clearly as the best thing we can desire (and, therefore, the prize worth the most effort), other goals, which may once have seemed highly desirable, assume their proper character and seem much easier to achieve.

Because hope is the habit by which we long for our eternal salvation, it is a very personal matter. However, when we come to consider the virtue of charity..., we shall see how [a] loving God enables us to love God's creation. This includes loving ourselves, of course, but also loving our neighbor. Thus, we may properly identify a social dimension to the virtue of hope, whereby we long not only for our own salvation but for that of others. Our Catechism teaches, "Buoyed up by hope, [an individual] is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity" (1818). As we saw when we considered the virtue of faith, a gift is not given just to enrich the individual who receives it. The virtue of hope encourages us to embrace a selfless love that reaches out to all of God's creatures.

Hope can only exist in beings who have not yet achieved the goal they seek. It is, thus, always concerned with something in the future. The angels, and the souls in heaven, have no need of hope, for they enjoy God's eternal life as an ever-present reality. Similarly, the souls of the damned have no hope, although for a far different - and quite frightening - reason. Those condemned to Hell are aware their punishment is everlasting. Because they cannot escape this state to attain happiness of any sort, they have nothing to hope for.

We have all heard the expressions "to give up" or "to lose" hope. In everyday life this ordinarily means concluding that some good thing is beyond our reach. Such a conclusion is unquestionably disappointing and painful, but usually, after a time, we are able to leave behind the pain and disappointment. However, when we consider the state

of the damned (those souls which, by definition, are without hope) we see that giving up or losing theological hope is a far more serious matter.

Saint Thomas teaches, "the true opinion of the intellect about God is that from him comes salvation to mankind and pardon to sinners...." (II-II, 20.1). The habit of hope leads and encourages us to embrace this truth, as the letter to the Hebrews reminds us, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).

This is a comforting and compelling message, but the freedom of our will always allows us to reject it - to our peril - either by imagining that God refuses pardon to repentant sinners, or to believe that God does not turn sinners to himself by means of grace. This error is the sin of despair. It is an extremely serious sin, because its consequences can prove fatal to our hope of everlasting life. Despair denies God's justice by refusing to believe God will remain faithful to His promises. It also denies God's mercy, refusing to acknowledge that God wants us to enjoy everlasting life with Him. Saint Paul offers an antidote to these temptations, encouraging us to surrender to "The Holy Spirit ... He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that we might be justified by His grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life" (Titus, 3:6).

Despair consists in denial, but one can also sin against hope by over-affirmation; this sin we call presumption. Presumption is the error by which one imagines that eternal life is a goal within his unaided reach, or by which he places too-little value on God's justice, imagining God's mercy to be so great that an individual need not repent of sins he has committed.

The virtue of hope enables us to see life with God as a goal possible - if difficult - to attain. We cannot fear the God who is Goodness itself. However, we may reasonably fear the just consequences of our sins against Him, and if our fear is purified through love, we will reasonably fear offending God by sin. The fear of God's justice is called "servile", because it is based in a desire to avoid punishment; the fear of committing a fault against one we love is called "filial" fear, [like] the fear a child feels at the prospect of offending a loving parent.

Our Catechism tells us that prayer is one sign the virtue of hope is at work in our lives. Why? Because both prayer and hope are concerned with the future. "Prayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God's commandments", the Catechism teaches, so prayer is an all-important element in our quest for the salvation for which we long. Prayer enables us to align our will with God's, so prayer brings us one-step-closer to the everlasting life that is the goal - possible, but difficult - of the virtue of hope.

In the Gospel we read, "[we] ought always to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1). These words assure us that our hope is not in vain. And if we look for examples, individuals who demonstrate most clearly what hope enables us to accomplish, we need look no further than our ancestors-in-faith. In the Old Testament we find a model in Abraham, strengthened by hope to surrender to what must often have seemed God's incomprehensible demands. In the New Testament, of course, we find the Virgin Mary, humbly looking toward a future in which all God's People will recognise the blessedness that is the 'reward' of her fidelity.

Hope is God's gift, sustained by God's love. That it is a way of life, built on prayer and practice, and that - although fidelity to the virtue may not always be easy - it leads to an everlasting goal God will enable us to grasp. The Catechism teaches that our worship of God sets-us-free. The virtue of hope allows us to 'revel' in this freedom, for the possibility of everlasting life in God's Kingdom encourages and enables us to look beyond the lure of the present, and to reject the many idols we encounter each day.

Father Reginald Martin, O.P. (abridged)

Weekly Mass Schedule

DAY	DATE	TIME	FEAST DAY
Sunday	8 October	3:00 p.m.	Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost (2 nd cl.)
Monday	9 October	No Mass	St. John Leonardi, <i>Confessor</i> (3 rd cl.) <i>Commemoration: St. Denis & Companions</i> <i>Thanksgiving Day</i>
Tuesday	10 October	7:30 a.m.	St. Francis Borgia, <i>Confessor</i> (3 rd cl.)
Wednesday	11 October	7:30 a.m.	Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (2 nd cl.)
Thursday	12 October	7:30 a.m.	Feria (4 th cl.)
Friday	13 October	7:30 p.m.	St. Edward, <i>Confessor King</i> (3 rd cl.)
Saturday	14 October	8:00 a.m.	St. Callistus, <i>Pope, Martyr</i> (3 rd cl.)
Sunday	15 October	3:00 p.m.	Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost (2 nd cl.)

Announcements

Family Park Day – Friday, October 13th, 12:30 pm, Location: Mill Woods Park.

Adult Catechism – “Inspiration and the Bible” – Fr. Creurer will present a course on this theme beginning Friday, October 13th from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. The course will continue for about seven one-hour sessions each Friday.

Catholic School Trustee elections (Monday, 16 October) – See <https://caedm.ca/2017-school-trustee-elections> for the Archdiocese of Edmonton website devoted to school trustee elections – map of school districts, links to stories on various candidates, links to candidate information

For the full list of announcements for the Archdiocese of Edmonton, see www.caedm.ca

100th Anniversary of the Appearances of Our Lady at Fatima 13 May – 13 October 2017

Entrustment to the Virgin Mary

“O Mother of all men and women, and of all peoples, you who know all their sufferings and their hopes, you who have a mother’s awareness of all the struggles between good and evil, between light and darkness, which afflict the modern world, accept the cry which we, moved by the Holy Spirit, address directly to your Heart. Embrace with the love of the Mother and Handmaid of the Lord, this human world of ours, which we entrust and consecrate to you, for we are full of concern for the earthly and eternal destiny of individuals and peoples.”

St. John Paul II, 7 June 1981

