

Pope Francis Reflects on the Nature of Hope

Speaks on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans During Morning Mass

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VATICAN CITY, October 29, 2013 (Zenit.org) - During his morning Mass at Casa Santa Marta today, Pope Francis reflected on the nature of Hope, saying that it is not optimism but rather “an eager expectation towards the revelation of the Son of God.” The Holy Father drew his words from the first reading of St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans.

The Pope emphasized that Hope does not disappoint, it is secure. However, the Holy Father clarified to have Hope does not meant to be optimistic. “Hope is not an optimism, it is not the capacity to see things with a good spirit and go forward. No, that is optimism, it is not Hope. Nor is Hope a positive attitude in front of things,” the Pope said. “This is good! But it is not Hope.”

“It is not easy to understand what is Hope. It is said that it is the most humble of the three Virtues, because it is hidden in life. Faith is seen, is felt, it is known what it is. Charity can be one, it is known what it is. But what is Hope? What is this attitude of Hope? To approach this a bit, we can say firstly that Hope is a risk, it is a risky Virtue, it is a Virtue, as Saint Paul says, ‘of an eager expectation towards the revelation of the Son of God.’ It is not an illusion.”

Pope Francis went on to explain that the early Christians depicted Hope as an anchor that is fixed on the shore of the afterlife. The goal of a Christian is

to walk towards this anchor. The Holy Father then asked those present to contemplate on where are they anchored in their own lives.

“Are we anchored just beyond the shore of that ocean far away or are we anchored in an artificial lagoon, that we have made ourselves, with our rules, our behaviors, our schedules, our clericalism, our ecclesiastical attitudes, not ecclesial? Are we anchored there? All comfortable, all secure? That is not Hope.”

Another image of this Hope the Holy Father said that St. Paul indicates is that of going into labor. **Hope, he stressed, is within this “dynamic of giving life.”** The fruits of this labor, however, are unseen. The Holy Father compared this image of St. Paul to the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“I think of Mary, a young girl, when after hearing that she was a mother, her attitude changes and she goes, she helps and sings that hymn of praise,” the Pope said.

“When a woman becomes pregnant, she is a woman, but she is never (only) just a woman: she is a mother. And Hope is something like this. It changes our attitude: it is us, but we are not ourselves; it is us, looking over there, anchored over there.”

Concluding his homily, Pope Francis addressed a group of Mexican Priests who were present at the Mass celebrating their 25th anniversary of Priestly Ordination. **“Ask Our Lady, Mother of Hope,** that your years be years of Hope, to live as priests of Hope,” he said to them.

FROM THE BOOK OF HEAVEN

HOPE



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"Here is how I (Jesus) want you (Luisa) to occupy your soul. First, fly upon the wings of Faith, and in that light, by plunging yourself into it, you will Know and Acquire ever more News about Me, your God; but by knowing Me more, your nothingness will feel almost dissolved, and you will have no place to lean on. You, however, rise more, and ***Dive into the Immense Sea of Hope, which is made of all My Merits that I Acquired in the Course of My mortal Life, and of all the Pains of My Passion,*** which I also gave to man as Gift. Only through these can you Hope for the Immense Goods of Faith, because there is no other way to obtain them. So, as you avail yourself of these Merits of Mine as if they were your own, your 'nothing' will no longer feel dissolved and sinking into the abyss of nothingness, but acquiring New Life, it will be Embellished and Enriched, in such a way as to draw the very Divine Gazes upon itself. Then the soul will no longer be timid, but Hope will administer to her Courage and Strength, in such a way as to render her stable like a pillar exposed to all the intemperances of the air, which are the various tribulations of life, and which do not move her a tiny bit. *And Hope will cause the soul not only to immerse herself without fear into the Immense Riches of Faith, but to make herself the owner of them; and **through Hope she (the soul) will reach such a point as to make God Himself her own.*** Ah, yes! ***Hope makes the soul reach wherever she wants; Hope is the Door of Heaven*** - only by means of It can it be opened, because one who Hopes for everything, obtains everything. Then, after the soul has reached the point of making God Himself her own, immediately, without any obstacle, she will find herself in the Immense Ocean of Charity, and carrying Faith and Hope with her, she will Immerse herself in it and will form one single thing with Me, her God."

Most loving Jesus continued: "If Faith is the king, Charity is queen, and ***Hope is like the Peacemaking Mother who pacifies everything.*** In fact, with Faith and Charity there may be disturbance, *but Hope, being Bond of Peace, converts everything into peace. Hope is support, Hope is refreshment;* and when the soul, rising by means of Faith, sees the Beauty, the Sanctity and the Love with which she is Loved by God, and feels drawn to Love Him, but in seeing her insufficiency, how little she does for God, and how she should Love Him but does not, she feels discomfited, disturbed and almost does not dare to draw near God – *immediately this Peacemaking Mother (Hope) comes out, and placing Herself between Faith and Charity, She begins to perform Her Office of Peacemaker. She makes the soul Peaceful again, She (Hope) pushes her (the soul), raises her, gives her New Strengths; and carrying her before King Faith and Queen Charity, She (Hope) excuses the soul, She (Hope) places a New Effusion of Her Merits before the*

soul, and She (Hope) Prays them to receive her (the soul). And Faith and Charity, with their Gazes fixed only on this Peacemaking Mother, so Tender and Compassionate, receive the soul, and God Forms the Delight of the soul, and the soul the Delight of God."

Oh, Holy Hope, how Admirable You are! I imagine seeing the soul who is Possessed by this Beautiful Hope, like a noble wayfarer, who walks in order to go and take possession of a land that will make his whole fortune. But since he is unknown and he journeys through lands which are not his, some deride him, some insult him, some strip him of his clothes, and some reach the point of beating him and even of threatening to kill him. And the noble wayfarer – what does he do in all these trials? Will he be disturbed? Ah, no – never! On the contrary, he will deride those who do all this to him, and knowing with certainty that the more he suffers, the more he will be honored and glorified when he comes to take possession of his land, he himself teases the people into tormenting him more. But he is always tranquil, he enjoys the most Perfect Peace; and what is more, while in the midst of these insults, he remains so calm, that while the others are all alert around him, he keeps sleeping in the Bosom of his longed-for God. Who administers so much Peace and so much Firmness to this wayfarer in continuing the Journey he has undertaken? ***Certainly Hope in the Eternal Goods that will be his;*** and since they are his, he will surpass everything in order to take possession of them. Now, by thinking that they are his own, he comes to Love them – ***and here is how Hope gives Rise to Charity.***

Hope, Peacemaking Mother

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This morning I felt a little disturbed and all annihilated within myself. I saw myself as if the Lord wanted to drive me away from Him. Oh, God, what a harrowing pain this is! While I was in such a state, blessed Jesus came, with a little rope in His hand, and pounding on my heart three times, He told me: "Peace, peace, peace, don't you know that ***the Kingdom of Hope is a Kingdom of Peace, and that the Right of this Hope is Justice?*** You, when you (Luisa) see that My Justice Arms Itself against the people - enter into the Kingdom of Hope, and investing yourself with the most Powerful Qualities She Possesses, rise up to My Throne and do as much as you (Luisa) can to disarm the armed Arm. And you will do this with the most eloquent, the most tender, the most compassionate voices, with the most compelling reasons, with the most heated

prayers, which Hope Herself will dictate to you. But when you (Luisa) see that Hope Herself is about to support certain Rights of Justice which are absolutely necessary, and wanting to give them up would be wanting to give affront to Herself, which cannot be – then conform to Me and surrender to Justice."

And I, terrified more than ever for having to surrender to Justice, said to Him: 'Ah, Lord, how can I do this? Ah, it seems impossible to me! The mere thought that You have to chastise people I cannot tolerate, because they are Your Images. Were they at least creatures that did not belong to You... Yet, this is nothing; but what tortures me the most is having to see You – I would almost say – being struck by Yourself, slapped, scourged and grieved by Yourself, because the chastisements will pour upon Your own Members – not upon others, and therefore You Yourself will suffer. Tell me, my sole and only Good, how will my heart be able to bear seeing You suffer, struck by Your very Self? If creatures make You suffer, they are always creatures and it is more tolerable, but this is so hard that I cannot swallow it. Therefore, I cannot conform to You, nor can I surrender.'

And He, moved to pity and all touched by my words, assuming an afflicted and benign appearance, told me: "My daughter (Luisa), you are right that I (Jesus) will be struck in My own Members, so much so, that in hearing you speak, I feel all My Interior moved to Compassion and Mercy, and I feel My Heart split with Tenderness. But, believe Me, the chastisements are necessary, and if you do not want to see Me struck a little bit now, you will see Me struck more terribly later, because they will offend Me more. Would this not grieve you more? Therefore, conform to Me, otherwise you will force Me not to tell you anything any more so as not to see you grieved. And with this, you would deny Me the Relief I receive in conversing with you (Luisa). Ah, yes, you would reduce Me to silence, with no one with whom to pour My Pains out!"

Who can say how embittered I was left at His Words? And Jesus, almost wanting to distract me from my affliction, resumed His speech about Hope, telling me: "*My daughter (Luisa), do not be disturbed – **Hope is Peace**. And just as I (Jesus), in the very Act in which I make Justice, remain in the most Perfect Peace, you too, by immersing yourself in Hope, must remain at Peace.* The soul who is at Peace, by wanting to afflict herself, become disturbed or lose Trust, would run into the misfortune of one who, though possessing millions upon millions of coins, and even being queen of various kingdoms, keeps fantasizing and lamenting, saying: 'What shall I live on? How shall I clothe myself? Ah, I am dying of starvation! I

am so unhappy! I will be reduced to the meagerest misery and I will end up dying.' And while she says this, she cries, sighs and spends her days in sadness and squalor, immersed in the greatest melancholy. But this not all; the worst thing about her is that if she sees her treasures, if she walks within her properties, instead of rejoicing, she afflicts herself more, thinking of her nearing end; and if she sees food, she does not want to touch it to sustain herself. And if anyone tries to persuade her by letting her touch her riches with her own hands, showing her that it cannot be that she will be reduced to the meagerest misery, she is not convinced, she remains dazed, and cries even more over her sad lot. Now, what would people say about her? That she is crazy, that it shows that she has no reason, that she has lost her brain. The reason is clear, it cannot be otherwise.

Yet, it can happen that she may run into the misfortune over which she keeps fantasizing. But in what way? By going out of her kingdoms, abandoning all of her riches, and going into foreign lands in the midst of barbarian people, where no one will deign to give her a crumb of bread. Here is how the fantasy has become reality – what used to be false, is now true. But who has been the cause of it? Who should be blamed for a change of state so sad? Her perfidious and obstinate will. Such is precisely the soul who is in possession of Hope: her wanting to become disturbed or discouraged is already the greatest madness."

And I: *'Ah, Lord, how can a soul be always at Peace, Living in Hope? And if the soul commits a sin – how can she be at Peace?'* And Jesus: ***"In the act of sinning, the soul already goes out of the Kingdom of Hope, because sin and Hope cannot be together.*** Every common sense believes that each one is obliged to respect, preserve and cultivate what belongs to him. Who is that man who goes into his properties and burns what he possesses? Who does not keep his possessions jealously? I believe no one. Now, the soul who lives in Hope, by sinning, already offends Hope, and if it were in her power, she would burn up all the Goods that Hope Possesses. Then she would find herself in the misfortune of that lady who, abandoning her goods, goes to live in foreign lands. In the same way, by sin, going out of ***this Peacemaking Mother, Hope, so tender and compassionate, who reaches the point of nourishing her with her own flesh, which is Jesus in the Sacrament, the Primary Object of our Hope,*** the soul goes to live in the midst of barbarian people, which are the demons who, denying her the slightest refreshment, nourish her with nothing but poison, which is sin. *Yet, what does this Peacemaking Mother do? Does she perhaps remain indifferent while the soul*

moves away from her? Ah, no! She Cries, She Prays, She Calls her (the soul) with the most Tender and most Moving Voices; She (Hope) goes after her (the soul), and when She leads her (the soul) back into Her Kingdom, only then is She (Hope) content."

My sweet Jesus continues telling me: ***"The Nature of Hope is Peace, and what She (Hope) is by Nature, the soul (Luisa) who Lives in the Bosom of this Peacemaking Mother acquires by Grace."*** And in the very act of speaking these words, by means of an intellectual Light, *blessed Jesus makes me see, through the simile of a mother, what this Hope has done for man. Oh, what a moving and most tender scene! If all could see it, even the hardest hearts would cry with contrition, and all would grow so fond of Her (Hope), that it would become impossible for them to detach even for one moment from Her Maternal Knees.*

I will now try to say what I comprehend and what I can: man used to live in chains, slave of the devil, condemned to eternal death, without the Hope of being able to Live again to Eternal Life. Everything was lost, and his Destiny had gone to ruin. *This Mother (Hope) Lived in Heaven, United with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Blissful and Happy with Them; but it seemed She (Hope) was not content - She wanted Her children, Her dear Images, the most Beautiful Work that came out of Her Hands, to be around Her. Now, while She (Hope) was in Heaven, Her Eyes were intent on man, who was lost on earth. She is all occupied with how to save these beloved children of Hers, and in seeing that these children can in no way satisfy the Divinity, even at the cost of any sacrifice, because they are greatly inferior to It - what does this Compassionate Mother do? She (Hope) sees that there is no other means to save these children than to give Her own Life to save theirs, taking their pains and miseries upon Herself, and doing everything that they were supposed to do for themselves. So, what does She (Hope) think of doing? **This Loving Mother (Hope) presents Herself before Divine Justice with Tears in Her Eyes, with the most Tender Voices, with the most compelling Reasons which Her Magnanimous Heart dictates to Her, and says: "I ask for Grace for My lost children, I don't have the Heart to see them separated from Me. I want to save them at any cost, and even though I see that there is no other way but to lay down My Life, I want to do it as long as they may reacquire their own. What do You (Divine Justice) want from them? Reparation? I repair for them. Glory, honor? I glorify and honor You for them. Thanksgiving? I thank You for them. Everything You want from them, I give You, provided that I may have them with Me, Reigning."***

The Divinity is moved in seeing the Tears and the Love of this Compassionate Mother, and persuaded by Her compelling Reasons, It (the Divinity) feels inclined to Love these children. The Divine Persons Cry together over their misfortune, and conclude in Accord that They accept the Sacrifice of the Life of this Mother, being fully satisfied, in order to Reacquire these children. As soon as the Decree is signed, immediately *She (Hope) descends from Heaven and comes upon earth, and laying down Her Royal Garments which She had in Heaven, She clothes Herself with human miseries, as if She were the most miserable slave, and She Lives in the most extreme poverty, in the most unheard-of sufferings, amid the scorns most unbearable to the human nature. She does nothing but Cry and Intercede for Her beloved children. But that which is most stupefying, both about this Mother and about these children, is that while She Loves these children so much, instead of receiving with open arms this Mother who is coming to save them, they do the opposite. No one wants to receive Her or recognize Her; on the contrary, they let Her go wandering, they despise Her, and begin to plot how to kill this Mother (Hope) so Tender, who Loves them so Passionately. What will such a Tender Mother do in seeing Herself requited so badly by Her ungrateful children? Will She stop? Ah, no! On the contrary, She becomes more Ignited with Love for them, and She runs from one point to another to gather them and place them on Her Lap. Oh, how She toils, how She struggles, to the point of dripping Sweat – not only of water, but also of Blood! She gives Herself not a moment of respite, She is always in Act to Operate their Salvation, She Provides for all their needs, She Remedies all their evils, past, present and future; in sum, there is nothing which She does not Order and Dispose for their Good.*

But what do these children do? Have they perhaps repented of their ingratitude in receiving Her? Have they changed their thoughts in favor of this Mother (Hope)? Ah, no! They scowl at Her, they dishonor Her with the vilest calumnies, they procure Her opprobrium, scorns and confusions, they beat Her with every kind of scourges, reducing all of Her to a Wound; and they finish by making Her die the most Infamous Death that can be found, in the midst of cruel Spasms and Pains. But what does this Mother (Hope) do in the midst of so many Pains? Will She perhaps hate these children, so unruly and arrogant? Ah, no - never! *It is then that She Loves them more Passionately than ever, offering Her Pains for their Salvation, and Breathing Her last with a Word of Peace and of Forgiveness. Oh, my beautiful Mother! Oh dear Hope, how admirable You are - I love you! O please! Keep me always on Your Lap, and I will be the Happiest in the world.*

While I am determined to stop speaking about Hope, a Voice Resounds everywhere around me, saying: **"Hope contains all Good, both present and future, and one (the soul) who Lives on Her Lap and is Raised on Her Knees, whatever he wants, obtains.** What does the soul want? Glory, honor? Hope will give her the greatest honor and glory on earth among all people, and in Heaven She (Hope) will glorify her (the soul) Eternally. Maybe she (the soul) wants riches? Oh! This Mother Hope is extremely Rich, and what is more, by giving Her Goods to Her children, Her Riches are not the least diminished. Moreover, these Riches are not fleeting and passing - but Eternal. Does she (the soul) want pleasures, contentments? Ah, yes! This Hope contains within Herself all possible Pleasures and Tastes which can be found in Heaven and on earth, so much so, that no one will ever be able to equal her (the soul); and one who nourishes herself (the soul) from Her (Hope's) Breast enjoys them to her (the soul's) fill, and – oh, how Happy and Content is she (the soul)! Does she (the soul) want to be Learned and Wise? This Mother Hope contains the most Sublime Sciences within Herself – even more, **She (Hope) is the Master of all masters, and one (the soul) who lets herself be taught by Her (Hope) Learns the Science of True Sanctity."**

In sum, Hope provides us with everything, in such a way that if one is weak, She (Hope) gives him Strength; if another is stained, Hope instituted the Sacraments and in them She prepared the Bath for his sins. If one is hungry or thirsty, this Compassionate Mother (Hope) gives us the most Beautiful, the Most Delicious Food, which is Her Most Delicate Flesh, and as Drink, Her (Hope's) Most Precious Blood. What else can this Peacemaking Mother Hope do? And who else is similar to Her? Ah, She (Hope) alone has reconciled Heaven and earth! Hope has United Faith and Charity with Herself and has formed that Indissoluble Link between human and Divine Nature. But, Who is this Mother? Who is this Hope? **She is Jesus Christ, who Operated our Redemption and Formed the Hope of man astray.**