

## The Virtue of Hope Is the Virtue of the Wayfarer - MabuhayRadio

Written by Francis Fernandez

Friday, 06 June 2008 23:21 - Last Updated Friday, 06 June 2008 23:33

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Christian asceticism pictures man's life on earth as a journey that has its end in God. We are all *homo viator*, the wayfarer longing to turn his steps quickly towards his definitive goal – God. Because of this we must all ' **provide ourselves with hope**' if we want to walk with a firm and certain step along the hard path in front of us  
(*Paul VI, Address, 9 December 1975*)

. If the traveller were to lose hope of reaching his destination he would not continue with his journey. The only thing that keeps him on his way is his trust that he will some day reach his goal. We want to travel very straight and fast towards holiness -- to God.

In human life, when a person sets himself an objective, his hope of achieving it is based on his physical resilience, his training and his own experience. When all is said and done it is based on his will power which enables him, if necessary, to draw strength from his very weakness. To reach the supernatural end of our existence, we do not rely on our own strength, but on God, who is all-powerful.

He is the faithful friend who does not let us down. His goodness and mercy are not the same as the mercy and goodness of men, which are frequently like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away (*First Reading, Hos 6:1-6*).

Thanks to the supernatural virtue of hope, the Christian can be confident that he will reach his definitive objective which has already begun with Baptism in this life and will remain forever in the next. This definitive objective is not something merely provisional, it is not the point of departure towards a further goal, as is the case with ordinary journeys. Through this virtue, we hope and long for that eternal life promised by God to those who love him, together with the means needed to achieve it and the support of his omnipotent help (*cf Catechism of St Pius X, 893*).

The greater the difficulties and the weaker we are, the stronger our hope in God has to be, for the greater his help will be. His closeness to our lives will be all the more evident. In the Second Reading of the Mass

(*Rom 4:18-25*)

, Saint Paul recalls how Abraham believed in hope, against hope, that he should become the

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father of many nations; as he had been told. John Paul I comments: You will still say, 'How can this happen?' It can happen because it clings tightly to three truths: God is omnipotent, God loves me immensely, God is faithful to his promises. And it is He, the God of mercy, who awakens trust within me; trust which makes me know that I am not alone, or use less or cast aside, but rather that I am part of a salvific destiny which will end one day in Paradise  
(John Paul I, Address, 20 September 1978)

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Abraham did not hesitate despite his advanced years and his wife's sterility, but he trusted firmly in the power and mercy of God, being fully persuaded that God is able to do what He promises. And aren't we going to trust Jesus Christ '*who was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification*'? How could God leave us alone to deal with the obstacles we encounter which try to prevent us living in accordance with the call we have received from Him? He holds out his hand to us in many different ways: normally in our daily prayer, in our fulfillment of the plan of life we have set ourselves, in the sacraments, and in a special way, in the advice we receive in spiritual direction. Our Lord will never leave us alone on our journey through this world and on which we frequently experience faintheartedness and weakness. The hope of becoming saints, of faithfully doing what God expects of each of us, depends on our accepting the hand that He holds out to us. This virtue is not based on our own worthiness, on our personal situation in life, or on the absence of difficulties, but on God's will - on his will that we should reach the goal - a will which is always accompanied by all the grace and help that we can need in any possible circumstances.

'*Nam, et si ambulavero in medio umbrae mortis, non timebo mala*' – though I should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, no evil will I fear. Neither my wretchedness nor the temptations of the enemy will worry me, '  
*quoniam tu mecum es*  
' - for you Lord are with me  
(J. Escrivá, *The Forge*, 194)

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