

HOPE and the MIND — Part I

January 18, 2024

Zilkia Jimenez

*“The one who has hope lives differently;
the one who has hope has been granted the gift of a new life.”*

Pope Benedict XVI Spe Salvi,



Summary:

The purification of our emotions must be preceded by the purification of our minds. There is a necessary process in surrendering our thoughts and “taking them captive to obey Christ.” This begins with a certain attentiveness to our thought life and then full obedience in redirecting our thoughts to Christ.

TEXT for Week 1

HOPE. What is hope? What does it mean to hope? Is it possible for hope to go unnoticed in our lives or even forgotten?

“We who have always lived with the Christian concept of God, and have grown accustomed to it, have almost ceased to notice that we possess the hope that ensues from a real encounter with this God (Pope Benedict XVI - SS 3).”

These words might resonate with some of us, especially if we have been walking with the Lord and have become accustomed to having the Lord in our lives. And so again... it is good to ask ourselves: Is it possible for hope to go unnoticed in our lives or even forgotten?

Let us ponder the definition and meaning of hope:

Hope is the confident desire to obtain a future good that is difficult to attain. It is, therefore, a desire, which implies **seeking** and **pursuing** some future good that is not

yet possessed but wanted, unlike fear that shrinks from a future evil. ***This future good draws out a person's volition (the faculty or power to use one's will).*** Hope is confident that what is desired will certainly be attained. It is the opposite of despair. Yet *it recognizes that the object wanted is not easily obtained and that it requires effort to overcome whatever obstacles stand in the way* (Catholic Culture).

"Seeking and pursuing"; in other words, hope is something we have to work toward... we have to intentionally look for it. It "draws out a person's volition." In other words, we have to use our WILL. We have to be intentional and make an effort to live out hope.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1817, Christian hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit (Catholic Answers.com)."

The following teaching called *Heralds of Hope* from 2022, found on our website, offers us insight:

- "Hope is what opens the curtains of our hearts and allows the light to dispel the wounds created by the darkness of fear."
- "Hope is the virtue that intercedes ... transforming fear that shackles and enslaves us into a fear that liberates and heals."
- "Satan uses fear to spiritually cripple us into avoiding suffering, RESISTING TOTAL TRUST IN GOD, and detaching ourselves from self-pity."
- "Fear of the Lord, however, enters into that wound of fear to bring about an awareness...that trusting God means knowing He will care for the details of our lives especially when we don't see how or what He is doing."

The Lord has told us, *"It is impossible to be My witnesses if you have not been transformed into Me by the Spirit so that we are ONE, no longer two* (Good Friday, 4/7/23)." For years the Lord has brought us an abundance of healing of our wounds, healing of our hearts, healing of our emotions. There is a deep connection between our emotions and the virtue of hope. Father Jordi always reminds us, "Be careful with your mind." There is also a connection between the virtue of hope and our thoughts and imagination. Another teaching from Fr. Ron is quite relevant here. Father Ron, in a short teaching from April 23, 2020, spoke about the imagination and our need to surrender it to the Lord. The following notes from that teaching are relevant:

Father Ron's words regarding the imagination. 4/23/20

- "For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God." John 3:20-21
- Wrought: beaten out or shaped by hammering. Melted, molded, shaped, brought into being.
- Fr. Ron: "How much time do we spend in our imagination?
 - Our imagination is a secret place
 - Sin takes place there
 - Our imaginations take us into another world
 - God would love for us to give Him our imaginations
 - We are attached to our imaginations
 - We like to go to our imagination to escape

- We don't want to share it
- We must ask... "Do I give my mind to God but keep my imagination separate from him?"

These words from Fr. Ron are extremely impactful and should lead us to ponder. This is a good point to ask ourselves: have I given Jesus my imagination, my thoughts, my memory? Many of us have given ourselves entirely to Him, but have we surrendered our minds? This process is very difficult.

The following messages are significant for this teaching. The Lord has told us:

"My flame of love is the Holy Spirit. Through My Path, My flame of love has possessed your minds, hearts, and faculties so that it is no longer you who live but I who live in you. In this way, I live in you as you live in Me, and the Father lives in us. Do not be afraid to be sent out as My heralds of HOPE to usher in My era of peace. Do not be afraid to confront the forces of evil as My Light, for it is the light of My holy remnant that will conquer the forces of darkness. Believe that you are the light of the world and hold the power of God." 5/26/14 #68

"My Flame of Love has now possessed your faculties. You now live in peace in the darkness of faith without My sweet consolations. My flame of love has now possessed your faculties of sight, touch, hearing, and speaking. It is My Spirit in you who sees into the hearts of others; it is God's touch moving through your hands; you live now in the "silence" of the Trinity, and your words are wisdom and understanding itself." 5/26/14 #67

Surrendering our secret place, our imaginations, and thought life is quite difficult. This is the place where we feel we can control our situations and outcomes because it is our very own space in which we can think up anything we desire. We can ruminate over past situations, dwell on what could have been different, or worry about future possible scenarios of a particular situation. But in reality, when we live in our imaginations and thoughts, it is really our minds controlling our will. We act and move according to what we are thinking.

The question again: have we given our thoughts and imaginations over to God? Do we want to give up control of this secret place? If you find that you do not want to surrender your mind, thoughts, and imagination, you are not alone. However, this is precisely what needs to be done if we want to be people of hope. Our prayer must become one of complete surrender. Our prayer must be to hand over our minds, thoughts, imaginations, memories, and our free will in choosing the thoughts we allow in our secret place. This is not an easy process, but it is an absolutely essential process in order for us to be transformed and renewed. It is also a process that must be repeated as often as necessary, especially when we find ourselves wanting to hide in our minds from God.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical called Spe Salvi ("Spe Salvi facti sumus → in hope we were saved"), makes two important points:

- "We must learn to purify our desires and our hopes (SS 33)."
- "To come to know God—the true God—means to receive hope. (SS 3)."

Purifying our emotions is something we have learned about. In a men's teaching on December 28, 2021, to the Missionaries of the Cross, the following points were made:

Men's Teaching-Lourdes on 12/28/21

- We need to purify our emotions... ***so we no longer react from emotions... we need deeper purification.***
- "We need to ***understand*** and ***manage*** our emotions."
- "Emotions are connected with wounds."

The words "understand" and "manage" are important here, especially as we also consider the words "we need a deeper purification" because the purification of our emotions begins with the purification, understanding, and managing the mind...our thought life.

We cannot live in hope if our minds are running off with all kinds of rogue and negative thoughts because they lead to emotions of anxiety, worry, and anger. In essence, our will is controlled by our thought life. Hope is a gift, and we have to CHOOSE to receive it. We have to exercise our free will and CHOOSE to hope, CHOOSE to go against thoughts that plague the mind and do not allow us to live in hope. When we fall into fear, worry, anger... we must choose to receive hope. And at the same time, hope will allow us to choose. Exercising our free will, however, is extremely difficult. Our Lord offers us advice with regard to what should be our every thought in the following message given to our community:

"Begin to forget about yourself, and try to think only of Me and My passion of love. As I continue to suffer present in the Eucharist, I think only of souls and pleasing My Father. My gaze never leaves you, My little one. Try to mortify your flesh so that, more and more, you think only of Me and pleasing our Father as one with Me in the cloister of Mary's Heart. This practice will help you greatly during the time of great suffering that approaches quickly." 11/2/23

Our Lord here is giving us advice as to how we are to control our thoughts. We are to think only of Him and pleasing our Father in heaven. Lourdes spoke to us about this a few cenacles ago when she shared this message from the Lord with us. She also shared how difficult it was for her. And indeed, it is quite difficult. Here is where we have to practice our will... where we have to practice silence.

The purification of our emotions must be preceded by the purification of our minds. Our emotions and desires must be purified through our minds. It is impossible to become the new men and women God is calling us to be, His victims of love, if we are not transformed: ***"It is impossible to be My witnesses if you have not been transformed into Me by the Spirit so that we are ONE, no longer two (Good Friday message 4/7/23)."*** When hope is destroyed, man loses his sense of who he is. We must live in hope, and from that hope, we must then make choices that further lead to hope and demonstrate trust and faith in God.

Jesus spoke very clearly to me as He moved me through all this. I was reminded of words I felt the Lord give me back on May 20, 2012: ***"Remaining in your own thoughts, reliving situations keeps you within yourself, therefore putting yourself first. You gain nothing there. But you gain everything when you step outside of yourself."*** This was part of a larger message in which the Lord was asking me to step outside of myself and think of others first... in other words, be attentive to those He places in my life, which is one of the many teachings in Love Crucified.

I also felt the Lord say these words to me in my heart more recently on May 19, 2023, *“Believe in who you are. Believe with your mind. Choose to believe. I have told you who you are. Do you still not believe? When will you believe? Believe my daughter, believe in all that I have told you, for it is I, your God, who speaks to you. I desire so much to speak with you. And you must listen. Listen to My voice, the voice of your Shepherd. Praise My Holy Name. Praise always and in every situation.”* How often has the Lord asked us to believe?] During this time, on one particular Sunday at Mass, these words from the Gospel of John pierced my heart: *“Have I been with you for so long a time, and you still do not know me, Phillip?”* John 14:1-12. And I then felt the Lord ask me very personally... *“Have I been with you for so long a time, and you still do not know me”* and then called me by my name.

We can easily forget. It happens to all of us. We have to be honest with ourselves.

And so, again, it is a good time to ask... Do we remember what our Lord has told us? Do we remember who we are in Him? Do we remember who He has called us to be? Do we believe in all the Lord has spoken to us in Love Crucified?