

OLMC Faculty Retreat - Saint John Paul II - Witness of Hope
Saint Clare of Assisi Retreat Center & Adjoining Hall
Monday, October 12, 2020

8:45-9:00 - Gathering

9:00 - 9:15 - Opening

9:15-9:45 - What is hope? Single Words from Group

Short Testimony on Clara at the Nursing Home - Never discouraged, Sustained her in her loneliness, Very positive outlook on seeing Jesus, Joyful, Always praying for others and not herself – selfless, She lived out the expectation of eternal life

(Play “I Have This Hope” by Tenth Avenue North) (Large Group Discussion)

- 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. (CCC 1817)
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes the work and function of hope. It states: [This virtue] takes up the hopes that inspire men’s activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity. (CCC 1818)
- St. Paul declares, “Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees?” (Romans 8:24). This gift of the Holy Spirit helps us envision what still cannot be seen and which would otherwise be impossible to expect.
- Saint John Paul II stated in his 1985 apostolic letter to the youth of the world, *Dilecti Amici* (“Dear Friends”), Hope, as a Christian virtue, is necessarily “linked to the expectation of those eternal good things which God has promised to man in Jesus Christ,” namely eternal life in Heaven. Hope is also, he said, the human virtue of “**expectation of the good things which man will build**” using the talents given him by God.
- Pope Benedict XVI said in *Spe salvi* - Let us put it very simply: man needs God, otherwise he remains without hope.
- **As Educators, how are you building hope in your classrooms? How can people like Abraham, Mary, and Saint John Paul II, who are models of Hope, inform how we do this? (Small Group Discussion)**

9:45-10:30 - What can threaten (or take away) hope – Fear, misplacement, and doubt, and Self!? In what ways does it manifest itself?

Short Testimony on Fear of Being Judged and Self-Doubt – Tell the story of my call from Monsignor on my homily or the desire of being affirmed and the fear of not being liked or accepted. Reading one negative comment on the podcast can upset me. I find myself living out life in the worldly now and not in the eternal. When looking in the mirror my hope is not a reflection of the world but of me putting on Christ.

- Pope Francis reminds us that true hope is **not built on human words or assurances**, but on God’s Word and His promise of salvation and eternal life.
- So often today, man does not know that which is in him, in the depths of his mind and heart. So often he is uncertain about the meaning of his life on this earth. He is assailed by doubt, a doubt which turns into despair. We ask you, therefore, we beg you with humility and with trust, let Christ speak to man. He alone has words of life, yes, of life eternal.
(Play “Fear is a Liar” by Zach Williams) (Large Group Discussion)
- Luke 18 - Saint John Paul II expressed in reflecting on the parable of the rich young man, Jesus’ gaze into his eyes contained “a summary and synthesis of the entire Good News...an affirmation of man and of humanity” that Christ alone is capable of giving. “When everything would make us doubt ourselves and the meaning of our life, then this look of Christ, the awareness of the love that in him has shown itself more powerful than any evil and destruction, this awareness enables us to survive.”
- At the beginning of Saint John Paul II Pontificate, he stated, “Do not be afraid! Open, open wide the doors to Christ!”
- “Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity! Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” These powerful words of Pope St. John Paul II deliver a message of hope for this earthly pilgrimage. We cast out fear with radical hope in God’s final victory. But these words are also a challenge. It is a challenge for us to live

more deeply, more authentically the Gospel message and “put out into the deep.” It can be overwhelming to think about and deal with the problems of the world and the uncertainty of the future. And yet redemption is real, and God’s grace to overcome evil is available to us even now.

- He restored to Christianity its true face as a religion of hope, to be lived in history in an “Advent” spirit, in a personal and communitarian existence directed to Christ, the fullness of humanity and the fulfillment of all our longings for justice and peace. — Pope Benedict XVI, Homily at Beatification
- What types of fears do our students encounter? Why is fear prevalent? (Small Group Discussion)
- What fears do you have in your own life? (Silent, Personal Reflection Time)

10:30-11:15 - Suffering, Hope and the Paschal Mystery - Overcoming Fear & Doubt

Longer Testimony on Paschal Mystery as Hope – Jeff on ALS

- Saint John Paul II affirms the difficulties that are part of life, and yet challenges us to always live in hope. He writes: “In his everyday life, man must draw from the mystery of the redemption of the body the inspiration and strength to overcome the evil that is dormant in him because of the threefold concupiscence . . . what is at stake is the hope of the everyday, which in the measure of normal tasks and difficulties of human life helps to overcome ‘evil with good’ (Rom 12:21)”(TOB 86:7).
- “Do not let that hope die! Stake your lives on it! We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father’s love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son.”
- The Paschal Mystery is lived out in the lives of believers when they are people of hope fully believing in new life and the Resurrection. They believe that hope and life can come from suffering and sacrifice.
- In Romans 5, we learn: “Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”
- Pope Benedict encourages each of us “to know that I can always continue to hope, even if in my own life, or the historical period in which I am living, there seems to be nothing left to hope for. Only the great certitude of hope that my own life and history in general, despite all failures, are held firm by the indestructible power of Love, and that this gives them their meaning and importance, only this kind of hope can then give the courage to act and to persevere.” — “Spe Salvi,” 35.
- As a result of Christ’s salvific work, man exists on earth *with the hope* of eternal life and holiness. And even though the victory over sin and death achieved by Christ in his Cross and Resurrection does not abolish temporal suffering from human life, nor free from suffering the whole historical dimension of human existence, it nevertheless *throws a new light* upon this dimension and upon every suffering: the light of salvation (SD)
- These sufferings enable the recipients of that Letter to share in the work of the Redemption, accomplished through the suffering and death of the Redeemer. *The eloquence of the Cross and death* is, however, completed by *the eloquence of the Resurrection*. Man finds in the Resurrection a completely new light, which helps him to go forward through the thick darkness of humiliations, doubts, hopelessness and persecution. Therefore the Apostle will also write in the Second Letter to the Corinthians: “For *as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too*”(59). Elsewhere he addresses to his recipients words of encouragement (SD)
- Where can you find the Paschal Mystery in your own life? (Silent, Personal Reflection Time)

Maybe Speak on the Hope found in the Eucharist if Time Permits (I doubt it!)

It is not by accident that Hope is in the middle of faith hope and love.

11:15-11:30 - Move to Saint Joseph Church/Silence/Prayer

11:30 - Holy Mass

12:00 - Lunch/Fellowship

1:00 - Adoration and Confession

2:00 - Benediction

Close of Retreat