

August 25, 2025

Daily Reflections



SPES NON CONFUNDIT (HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT)

By Sister Katherine “Kit” Gray, CSJ

An Excerpt from Today's First Reading

*We give thanks to God always for all of you,
remembering you in our prayers,
unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and labor of love
and endurance in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ,
before our God and Father,
Knowing, brothers and sisters loved by God, how you were chosen.*

1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-4

Context

The first letter to the Thessalonians is believed to be Paul's earliest surviving letter; it was written about 49 a.d. during his second missionary journey. Paul

was writing to encourage the Christian community during persecution and to provide guidance about living as followers of Christ while waiting for Jesus' return.

The passage contains the earliest mention of the three theological virtues—faith, love, and hope. In this passage, Paul places hope last because this is the primary theme he wishes to address to the Thessalonians, some of whom have lost hope in the face of the death of loved ones (1 Thess 2:19; 4:13; 5:8). The order we are most familiar with is found in his letter to the Corinthians: “So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor 13:13).

Because my own hope is being challenged by events and realities in our world today and I hear that from others, I offer selections from Pope Francis' letter declaring the Jubilee Year of Hope (2025) for your reflection.

For Reflection

TO ALL WHO READ THIS LETTER, MAY HOPE FILL YOUR HEARTS

1. SPES NON CONFUNDIT. “Hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5). In the spirit of hope, the Apostle Paul addressed these words of encouragement to the Christian community of Rome. Hope is also the central message of the coming Jubilee.... For everyone, may the Jubilee be a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the “door” (cf. Jn 10:7.9) of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as “our hope” (1 Tim 1:1).

Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope.

3. Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross: “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life” (Rom 5:19). That life becomes manifest in our own life of faith, which begins with Baptism, develops in openness to God's grace

and is enlivened by a hope constantly renewed and confirmed by the working of the Holy Spirit.

7. In addition to finding hope in God's grace, we are also called to discover hope in the signs of the times that the Lord gives us. ... We need to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think ourselves overwhelmed by evil and violence. The signs of the times, which include the yearning of human hearts in need of God's saving presence, ought to become signs of hope.

8. The first sign of hope should be the desire for peace in our world, which once more finds itself immersed in the tragedy of war.... Is it too much to dream that arms can fall silent and cease to rain down destruction and death? May the Jubilee remind us that those who are peacemakers will be called "children of God" (Mt 5:9). The need for peace challenges us all and demands that concrete steps be taken. May diplomacy be tireless in its commitment to seek, with courage and creativity, every opportunity to undertake negotiations aimed at a lasting peace.

10. During the Holy Year, we are called to be tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind. I think of prisoners who, deprived of their freedom, daily feel the harshness of detention and its restrictions, lack of affection and, in more than a few cases, lack of respect for their persons. I propose that in this Jubilee Year governments undertake initiatives aimed at restoring hope; forms of amnesty or pardon meant to help individuals regain confidence in themselves and in society; and programs of reintegration in the community, including a concrete commitment to respect for law.

18. Hope, together with faith and charity, makes up the triptych of the "theological virtues" that express the heart of the Christian life (cf. 1 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 1:3). In their inseparable unity, hope is the virtue that, so to speak, gives inward direction and purpose to the life of believers. For this reason, the Apostle Paul encourages us to "rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, and persevere in prayer" (Rom 12:12). Surely we need to "abound in hope" (cf. Rom 15:13), so that we may bear credible and attractive witness to the faith and love that dwell in our hearts; that our faith may be joyful and our charity enthusiastic; and that each of us may be able to offer a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed, in the knowledge that, in the Spirit of Jesus, these can become, for those who receive them, rich seeds of hope. Yet what is the basis of our hope? To understand this, let us stop and reflect on "the reasons for our hope" (cf. 1 Pt 3:15).



For Prayer

*Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.*

*May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within
both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,*

your glory will shine eternally.

*May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.*

*May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.*

*To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.*

Amen.

2025 JUBILEE PRAYER

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