Living in Hope and Giving Hope

As Good Shepherd Sisters and partners in mission we continue to be inspired by the ideals of St John Eudes to continue the legacy of living and working “corde magno et animo volenti” - “with a great heart and a willing mind”

Holiness, he says, is the wholehearted openness to the love of God. It is visibly expressed in many ways, but the variety of expression has one common quality: concern for the needs of others.

Giving Hope

In our ministries to our struggling sisters and brothers all over the world, we encounter so many people who are burdened with insurmountable trials and challenges and on the brink of despair. We can become so discouraged when we do not know how we can help them. But we are called to become witnesses of Hope, the hope that is in us. Hoping against all hope is what guarantees our forward progress. We bring with us not an abstract idea but a person, the person of Jesus Himself who through us channels love and hope in so many ways.

Drawing from the experience of hope of St John Eudes:

“The second treasure is hope, which is one of joy and inexpressible consolation. For what a joy it is to hope with a hope that is certain and is never misled, based as it is on the word of God and eternal truth: to hope, that we will one day see the face of God and all the glories, treasures and pleasures beyond words which he possesses; that we will be one with God, eat at his table, be kings of an eternal royalty; that we will enjoy the same kingdom the eternal Father gave to his Son; that we will be seated on the throne of the Son of God and lastly that we will be, by grace and participation, what God is by nature and essence. What a joy it is to recognise that it is up to us to possess these blessings or not, since the road to heaven is easier than the one to hell. Isn’t it true that such hope should make us die with joy.” OC v.168

“Our wish, our object, our chief preoccupation must be to form Jesus in ourselves, to make his spirit, his devotion, his affections, his desires and his disposition live and reign there. All our religious exercises should be directed to this end. It is the work which God has given us to do unceasingly” (St. John Eudes, The Life and Reign of Jesus in Christian Souls).
Prayer

Father of mercies and God of all consolation, You gave us the loving Heart of your own beloved Son, because of the boundless love by which You have loved us, which no tongue can describe. May we render You a love that is perfect with hearts made one with His.

Grant, we pray, that our hearts may be brought to perfect unity: each heart with the other and all hearts with the Heart of Jesus....and may the rightful yearnings of our hearts find fulfilment through Him: Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy spirit one God, forever and ever. Amen.

– [Collect from Saint John Eudes’ Mass, Gaudeamus]

Our Christian life is a continuation and completion of the life of Christ in us. We should be so many Christs here on earth, continuing His life and His works, labouring and suffering in a holy and divine manner in the spirit of Jesus. - Saint John Eudes

Lord, you invite all who are burdened to come to you. Allow Your healing hand to restore me. Touch my soul with Your compassion for others; touch my heart with Your courage and infinite Love for all; touch my mind with Your wisdom, and may my mouth always proclaim Your praise. Teach me to reach out to You in all my needs and to trust in Your Divine will for my life.

Most loving Heart of Jesus, according to Your will, restore my mind body and spirit that I may serve You with all my heart. Touch gently this life which you have created, now and always. Amen.

Our God is the God of hope. He is the fullest expression of hope and love in this world that is chaotic and filled with disorder and confusion. God the Father sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ not only to bring hope to the earth but to provide a solution to all our troubles and give us a glorious life in the end.

Some texts for our reflection.

Romans 5:5

And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
1 Peter 1:3
Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Psalm 71:14
But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more

Reflection:

Do I live in joyful hope?
How are we encouraging each other to witness to hope?
How do I convey hope to the people I serve?

FINAL PRAYER: “A Prayer for Hope”

Loving Father, my life and situation are not hidden from Your eyes. You know me even before I was formed in my mother’s womb. I ask You to give me hope and assurance that You are here with me now guiding me in every step I take. I surrender to You now all the problems and challenges I am facing. I release to You all the burdens in my body, soul, and spirit and ask that You cleanse me with the blood of Your Son, Jesus Christ. I resign from taking control over my life and I submit to You full ownership and control henceforth. I have been living my life my way and failed to invite You to be the divine ruler over all areas of my life. I place on Your altar all the things that made me feel weak, defeated, failure, lack, and hopelessness.

Revive me again to hope, trust, love, and be joyful and peaceful and to rest in Your love, presence and glory. I choose to hope and I choose life and You. I believe that You can best take care of all my worries, anxieties, problems, and pains. Take charge, take over, take control, and take care of me. I love You, Lord with my entire being. Show me the way out of my discouragement. I put all of my trust in You. Fulfil your word and your promise in me that those who Hope in the Lord shall mount up with wings like an eagle, they shall renew their strength they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not be faint. Amen.

Submitted by Del Kang, RGS, Province of Singapore-Malaysia