



What do we mean by “Hope”?

Reflection for Pentecost Sunday

by Mgr Daniel McHugh

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever ”
[John 14:16]

We are very conscious in these days of living in times of uncertainty: in the UK we are particularly aware of financial insecurity, and the impact of global factors beyond our control. I think it is true to say that we are now even wondering about the possibility of war, and the hope of continuing prosperity being beyond our grasp. Just a while ago we were living in expectation of growth without end! Now it is no longer acceptable in politics to live in hope of something turning up!

So, when on Sunday last we celebrated World Communications Day in the Church with the theme given by the late Pope Francis *“share with gentleness the hope that is in your hearts”* [Peter 3:15-16] what were we thinking of? And, when we see ourselves as “Pilgrims of Hope” in this Jubilee Year, what is the aim of our journey? Certainty is something different from “hoping” for fine weather on a Bank Holiday Weekend!

I am reminded of the famous words of Our Lord to Pilate in St John’s Gospel [18:36] “My kingdom is not of this world”. It means His kingdom and his kingship are not earthly or political, but spiritual and divine. The renowned Theologians O’Collins and Farrugia in their Dictionary of Theology write *“In hope we go beyond our present incomplete existence to anticipate the full future of God’s final kingdom and the liberating resurrection of all creation.”* They go on to say it does not encourage *“passive waiting for God’s definitive intervention”* but *“authentic hope obliges Christians to be responsible for the world and to work for more justice and peace here and now.”*

When Pope Francis chose the theme for World Communication Day 2025 Vatican News pointed to the introductory text drawing attention to the fact that in today’s world *“too often communication is violent, aimed at striking and not establishing the conditions for dialogue....the prevailing standard seems to be that of competition, opposition and domination as can be seen in television talk shows, to verbal wars on social media.* It adds that for Christians, *“hope is a person, and he is Christ.”* It goes on *“when we speak of Christian hope we cannot disregard a community that lives the message of Jesus in such a credible way as to give a glimpse of the hope that it brings.”*

I was very interested to read the article of the journalist Miral Atik ‘Communicating hope in a time of crisis: Reflection from the Holy Land’ on the Pope Francis’ Message. He wrote: *“May we be storytellers of hope, reminding the world that even in darkness, Christ walks with us – and our words can become tools of his peace. Let us share this hope –*

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



faithfully, courageously, and tenderly – from the heart of the Holy Land to the ends of the earth.” He was writing as a Christian from the Holy Land at the request of the Vatican Dicastery for Social Communication to help share and promote Pope Francis’ Message. Miral wrote: *“We must speak with gentleness and respect, not aggression or fear.”* And, she highlighted the fact that Pope Francis *“offered the Risen Christ on the road to Emmaus as a model of true communication – one that begins by listening. Jesus first walked alongside the disciples in their confusion and grief, patiently seeing their pain before gently rekindling their hope.”* Miral goes on to say in a personal way *“we are called to journey with others, beginning not with words, but with presence.”* We are reminded of the words in the Gospel of St Luke Chapter 24 where the disciples come to realise the Risen Lord Jesus was with them: that is the hope we experience on Pentecost Sunday when we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon all those gathered in Jerusalem [Acts 2:1-11]. The event marks the beginning of the Church. Jesus had fulfilled his promise to send to his disciples a helper, an advocate, who would enable them to be his witnesses throughout the world. Let us turn to Our Lady of Good Counsel in the words of Pope Leo at her Shrine in Genazzano:

“Still in the first days of the pontificate, I felt the duty and a deep longing to approach Genazzano, the shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel, who, throughout my life, has accompanied me with her maternal presence, with her wisdom, and the example of her love for her son who is always the center of my faith. Way, truth and life.”

“Thank you Mother, for your help - accompany me in this new mission”

Leo PP XIV
May 10, 2025

We join with him in his new mission: we ask the Holy Spirit to empower us to take hope to the world. It is never too late to start Pope Leo said when giving Catechesis in Rome today 4 June on the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard: *“God never gives up on us. He is ready to accept and give meaning and hope to our lives.”*

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese