



JUST A GUY IN THE PEW
THE NARROW ROAD.

FEBRUARY 2022 | HOPE

*In loving memory of Bill Platten.
A leader, a mentor, a friend.*



THE NARROW ROAD

THE EVERYDAY GUIDE FOR THE EVERYDAY GUY



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WELCOME

Brothers in Christ,

I am so excited to deliver this resource to you. As I look back over the years at what God has had us doing at Just a Guy in the Pew, it has become obvious that His goal for our ministry is to help men become virtuous. Jesus didn't ask us to be merely "good" men; no He called us to be great men. In order for this to happen, we need to leave vice and selfishness behind and trade it in for virtue and selflessness. That is what will help us achieve the goal that Christ has for us all. That goal is holiness. In the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa, "The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God." What is God? He is holy and that's what we should hope to become as well.

The *Catechism* defines virtue in this way: "A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions" (CCC1803). Did you catch that? It says in order to be virtuous we need a habitual and firm disposition. This is where I think most men struggle. Most of us desire to do good. We desire to BE good. The problem is we don't have a system in place to form the necessary habits that shore up our will. Almost every man I have worked with over the years falls prey to this. We have the intention of being virtuous, but the road to hell is paved with good intentions, as they say. As men, we need structure and accountability to help us practice and live out virtue in our lives. Put pieces of wood for building a desk in front of a guy without directions or tools and the wood will soon be pushed to the side with a promise of getting to it later. Put that same wood in front of a guy with directions and a screw gun and he will build it in an hour. You see, the desire is there, we just need good directions.

That is what I hope these books can be for you every month. In them, you will be able to practice a singular virtue over 30 days in the different relationships of your life. This will help you dial your focus in on one virtue each month and will help keep you from feeling overwhelmed. Feeling overwhelmed is what makes most guys put something down. That's why we have made each day as simple as possible for you. We have even included the daily Gospel reading for you to read and reflect on what God is sharing with you personally that day. That in itself will help transform your life.

You also will have the opportunity to list out the ways in which you have practiced that month's particular virtue in the four different relationships in your life. Those are your relationship with God, your relationship with your spouse, your relationship

with your children, and your relationship with your neighbor. These are the places God wants us to grow in virtue. He uses the very people He puts in front of you each day as opportunities to grow in virtue and holiness. If you are not married and do not have children, use those two weeks to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.

The last piece we have included is the Opportunity for Grace Chart. This is not a commitment sheet but is exactly what it is called. It's an opportunity for grace. It is a list made up of simple yet powerful practices you can begin to put into place in your life. These are opportunities you can seek out throughout the month to receive God's grace or pass it along to your family or others. Most guys beat themselves up for what they don't do. This is an opportunity to shine light on the progress you are making each week in your spiritual life. It's a chance to see the positive instead of the negative.

It is my hope and prayer that you will find this simple yet powerful tool helpful. I hope that you will use this book each day to help continue on the path to holiness. If your goal is to be the man that God created you to be, then this will get you going in the right direction. I look forward to walking this journey towards becoming virtuous men beside you.

**In Christ,
John**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRACE

DAY	MORNING PRAYER	THE NARROW ROAD	DAILY MASS	CONFESSION	ADORATION	TIME WITH WIFE	TIME WITH KIDS	NIGHT PRAYER/ EXAMEN	SUNDAY MASS
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									

DAY	MORNING PRAYER	THE NARROW ROAD	DAILY MASS	CONFESSION	ADORATION	TIME WITH WIFE	TIME WITH KIDS	NIGHT PRAYER/ EXAMEN	SUNDAY MASS
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									
22									
23									
24									
25									
26									
27									
28									

THE VIRTUE OF HOPE

My brothers,

Hope is one of the three theological virtues alongside faith and charity. To me, it can be the most difficult to understand of the three. Hope is not simply born of being optimistic and having a positive attitude. Authentic hope is not built on the words or promises of the world. No, it is born from the Word of God and His promises that have been made through the life of His Son Jesus Christ. He is the source of real hope in our lives.

The Catechism defines hope as “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). We have talked many times about how we all seek to be joyful, to be happy. God placed this desire in all of us. It is what drives us to seek happiness and eternal life with Him. The virtue of hope answers this desire of our hearts and helps us to take the necessary step to obtain it. That step is surrendering and placing our total trust in God. The Catechism goes on to explain how hope works in us: “The virtue of hope 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). Did you get all that guys? Hope does amazing things for us! Hope inspires us to be better. It purifies our every action so that we can keep our minds and hearts on the goal of heaven. Hope keeps us from quitting by protecting us from discouragement and negativity. Hope is there for us when we feel that everyone and everything else has left us and we have nothing left. It reminds us in the midst of all of that we still have Jesus. Finally, hope turns us away from selfishness and places our attention on loving others the way Jesus has called us to. How incredible is all of that?

Every month we talk about the state the world is in and the wrong direction it seems bound and determined to go in. Many people in the world are lost and have given up hope. This is why it is so important for us to have hope in order to live the lives hope calls us to. Jesus has asked us to be His hands and feet in the world. We have to show the world that hope. That is what Peter meant when he told us in 1 Peter 3:15 to “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.” That is what it means to be a light in the world for Christ. That light He calls us to be is a beacon of hope for others. It is a light in the darkness. A hand of mercy to those in dire need of it. My brothers, let us no longer sit around and gripe

about the world and the discouraging times we are in. Let's show the world that hope is a person. This month, study what our church teaches us about the virtue of hope. Grow your understanding of what it means to have hope so that we can better illustrate it to the rest of the world. With our hope in Christ, let's show the world there is a better way.

VIRTUE PLAN FOR THE MONTH

VIRTUE: HOPE

MOTTO:

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

— Jeremiah 29:11

ROOT SINS:

Despair, Fear

WHERE DO I SEE THESE SINS IN MY LIFE?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

PLAN TO FORM HOPE

WEEK 1: Hope and God

WEEK 2: Hope and My Wife

WEEK 3: Hope and My Children

WEEK 4: Hope and My Neighbor

PRAYER FOR HOPE

O My God, relying on Thy almighty power,
And infinite mercy and promises,
I hope to obtain pardon of my sins,
The help of Thy grace, and life everlasting,
Through the merits of Jesus Christ,
My Lord and Redeemer. **Amen**

WEEK 1 REFLECTION:

HOPE AND GOD

I don't think there is one of us here that hasn't been in a bad spot in our lives before. You know what I am talking about. Those times in life where we feel like no matter what we do nothing gets better. Those times where you feel like you have made bad choices or mistakes and there is no way out. You feel isolated and alone, and the devil is just pounding away on you. You can't tell which way is up and which way is down. Joy seems as if it is forever out of your reach. Eventually, you come to the point of giving up. Through it all, what escapes you is how you got to this point in the first place. I have some experience in all of the above, and I am willing to bet I can give you a pretty close answer.

Most likely, you have placed your hope in the wrong thing or the wrong person. Oftentimes, when we feel the way described above, it is because we have placed our hope squarely in ourselves. We allow our hope to be rooted in our abilities and what we can do. Whether we know it or not, we have bought into the narrative of the world that you have to do for yourself. Somewhere along the way we have made up our minds that everything is on us. We have made ourselves into one-man armies that do not need anybody or anything. We make our own way and we place our hope in no one but ourselves. This is where we run into trouble. We cannot make ourselves happy. We cannot pull ourselves out of our sins and mistakes alone. St Paul says, "Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees?" (Romans 8:24) Hope in ourselves and in what we can make visible isn't really hope. You see, hope isn't just a positive attitude or a shot of optimism. Hope is a person. His name is Jesus Christ. Jesus and His Holy Spirit help us to envision what is possible in our lives and then gives us the means to do it. He is the reason for our hope. He is the reason that we can change. He is the reason we can turn our situations and our lives around. We have to trust him fully, and therein lies the problem. Most of us only trust ourselves. We don't want to give control of the wheel over to Jesus. We fear that in giving control over we will lose everything. In reality it is the opposite. We gain everything. We gain peace. We gain hope. We come to understand that we are limited creatures, but God is the creator, and there is nothing He can't do.

It is through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that we have hope. All of it shows us that God is a Father who keeps His promises. There is salvation. There is new life. There is a better way. All it takes is trusting in Jesus and giving Him your life. It is there you will find the hope you need to become a better man. In the words of Pope St. John Paul II, "It is He, Jesus Christ, the true Life, who gives hope and purpose to our earthly existence." This week, let's take our hands off the wheel. Let's place our trust in the rightful place and gain hope by fully surrendering our lives to Jesus.

WEEK 1: HOPE AND GOD

FEBRUARY 1, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"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."

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1817*

SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 5:21-43

And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him; and he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Ja'irus by name; and seeing him, he fell at his feet, and besought him, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well." And immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, "Who touched my garments?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had been done to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But ignoring what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue,

"Do not fear, only believe." And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. When they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, he saw a tumult, and people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a tumult and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Tal'itha cu'mi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and walked (she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY HOPE TO GOD TODAY?

WEEK 1: HOPE AND GOD

FEBRUARY 2, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

— Jeremiah 29:11



GOSPEL

LK 2:22-40

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel." And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phan'u-el, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with

fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY HOPE TO GOD TODAY?

WEEK 1: HOPE AND GOD

FEBRUARY 3, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle."

— St. Francis of Assisi



SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 6:7-13

And he called to him the twelve, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. And he said to them, "Where you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. And if any place will not receive you and they refuse to hear you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet for a testimony against them." So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY HOPE TO GOD TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"It is He, Jesus Christ, the true Life, who gives hope and purpose to our earthly existence."

— Pope St. John Paul II



GOSPEL

MK 6:14-29

King Herod heard of it; for Jesus' name had become known. Some said, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Eli'jah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Hero'di-as, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. For John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Hero'di-as had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee. For when Hero'di-as' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will grant it." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." And she went out, and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the baptizer." And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard and gave orders to bring his head. He went and

beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

[illegible]

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY HOPE TO GOD TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Jesus Christ, Lord of all things! You see my heart; you know my desires. Possess all that I am — you alone. I am your sheep; make me worthy to overcome the devil."

— **St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr**



SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 6:30-34

MEMORIAL OF SAINT AGATHA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them. As he went ashore he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY HOPE TO GOD TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"All the way to heaven is heaven, because Jesus said, "I am the way."

— St. Catherine of Siena



SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

LK 5:1-11

While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennes'aret. And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY HOPE TO GOD TODAY?

WEEK 1: HOPE AND GOD

FEBRUARY 7, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Only one thing is necessary in your anguish: bear everything with resignation to the Divine Will; for this will help you to attain your eternal salvation. Hope with a lively faith and you will receive everything from Almighty God.”

— St. Gerard Majella



SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 6:53-56

And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennes'aret, and moored to the shore. And when they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized him, and ran about the whole neighborhood and began to bring sick people on their pallets to any place where they heard he was. And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or country, they laid the sick in the market places, and besought him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched it were made well.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY HOPE TO GOD TODAY?

WEEK 2 REFLECTION:

HOPE AND MY WIFE

**If you are not married and do not have children, use this week to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.*

As we discussed in the first two reflections, Jesus is our hope. He is where our hope comes from. As men, we are called to emulate Him. St. Paul tells us that we are to love our wives as Christ loved the Church. We are to live our lives the way Jesus lived His. That means that we are to bring people hope. That is what it means to be His light to the world. That light is meant to be a beacon of hope. There is no greater place to bear that light of hope than in our relationship with our wives.

We have a choice in our marriages. We can either choose to be a man who is a beacon of hope to our wives, or we choose to be an agent of despair. I have seen first hand both sides of this coin. When I was living for myself and in the throes of my addictions, I was the furthest thing from a beacon of hope for Angela. I was the cause of so much pain for her. I was so selfish and unkind. I was harsh with my words and cold with my affections. The only time I really engaged with her was when I wanted something. She shared with me all the pain it caused her and how completely isolated and alone she was. She told me how much all of it caused her to hate me and how much time she spent in utter despair. She even told me that most of the time she wished for something to happen to me. There were times where she wished I was dead. Angela felt as if she was alone in everything. She felt alone in raising our children. She felt alone in caring for our home and our responsibilities. She felt alone in trying to exemplify and live out the faith for our children. I was nowhere near the man God created me to be, and this is a harsh example of where many people can find themselves in their marriages whether they are affected by addiction or not.

Men, we were created to be the spiritual leaders of our family. This starts by being the husbands our wives deserve. In a world that is rapidly changing and becoming more dark everyday, our wives need us to be men of hope for them. They need us to light the path before them. They need us to be an outward sign of Christ. They need us to take up our rightful place as the priest of our families and our homes. Angela tells me now that where I was once a source of tremendous pain and despair for her, I am now a source of her hope. She tells me how much my faith journey has helped her grow in her own hope. She tells me how much joy being equally yoked brings her. This is what it means to be a source of hope for your wife. We are meant to be that safe and familiar place for them to run to. We are supposed to be the rock on which they can lean on. This is what it means to exemplify Christ and to allow Him to become the center of your marriage. We are meant to die to ourselves so that He can live in and through us and we can be the men our wives deserve.

My brothers, it is time to examine our relationships with our wives. I challenge you to sit down and really take a hard look at your relationship with your wife and ask yourself if you are a source of hope or despair for her. Are you giving your wife the time she deserves? Are you taking the time to listen to where she is and what she is dealing with, or are you blowing off her cares and concerns? One of the greatest privileges God gives us is to be a source of hope for His daughters. Let's take this week and be just that.

WEEK 2: HOPE AND MY WIFE

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it 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."

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1818*

SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 7:1-13

Now when the Pharisees gathered together to him, with some of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands, observing the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they purify themselves; and there are many other traditions which they observe, the washing of cups and pots and vessels of bronze.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with hands defiled?" And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition! For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die'; but you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God) then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God through your tradition which you hand on. And many such things you do."

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: HOPE AND MY WIFE

FEBRUARY 9, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“There is no love without hope, no hope without love, and neither love nor hope without faith.”

— St. Augustine



GOSPEL

MK 7:14-23

And he called the people to him again, and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him.” And when he had entered the house, and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said, “What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man.”

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: HOPE AND MY WIFE

FEBRUARY 10, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"One who has hope lives differently."

— Pope Benedict XVI

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 7:24-30

MEMORIAL OF SAINT SCHOLASTICA, VIRGIN

And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house, and would not have any one know it; yet he could not be hid. But immediately a woman, whose little daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And he said to her, "Let the children first be fed, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." And he said to her, "For this saying you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." And she went home, and found the child lying in bed, and the demon gone.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

[illegible]

WEEK 2: HOPE AND MY WIFE

FEBRUARY 11, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do."

— Pope John XXIII

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 7:31-37

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decap'olis. And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech; and they besought him to lay his hand upon him. And taking him aside from the multitude privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, "Eph'phatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. And he charged them to tell no one; but the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 2: HOPE AND MY WIFE

FEBRUARY 12, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Pray, hope, and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer."

— St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina



GOSPEL

MK 8:1-10

In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him, and said to them, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come a long way." And his disciples answered him, "How can one feed these men with bread here in the desert?" And he asked them, "How many loaves have you?" They said, "Seven." And he commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. And they had a few small fish; and having blessed them, he commanded that these also should be set before them. And they ate, and were satisfied; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away; and immediately he got into the boat with his disciples, and went to the district of Dalmanu'tha.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

[illegible]

WEEK 2: HOPE AND MY WIFE

FEBRUARY 13, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"The cross means there is no shipwreck without hope; there is no dark without dawn; nor storm without haven."

— Pope St. John Paul II



GOSPEL

LK 6:17, 20-26

And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. "Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. "Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh. "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets. "But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. "Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger. "Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. "Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

[illegible]

WEEK 2: HOPE AND MY WIFE

FEBRUARY 14, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Let us then, my brethren, endure in hope. Let us devote ourselves, side-by-side with our hoping, so that the God of all the universe, as he beholds our intention, may cleanse us from all sins, fill us with high hopes from what we have in hand, and grant us the change of heart that saves. God has called you, and you have your calling.”

— St. Cyril of Jerusalem

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 8:11-13

MEMORIAL OF SAINTS CYRIL, MONK, AND METHODIUS, BISHOP

The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.” And he left them, and getting into the boat again he departed to the other side.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY WIFE TODAY?

WEEK 3 REFLECTION:

HOPE AND MY CHILDREN

**If you are not married and do not have children, use this week to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.*

The world is a tough place for a kid these days. It's a lot tougher than it was when I was young. Sure, we had to deal with some things, but nothing like what the world is throwing at them these days. It seems like every day my children are coming to me asking about things they shouldn't even be thinking about at their age. They are talking about republicans and democrats, sexual orientation, LGBTQ issues, racism, and many other things. My children are 9 and 12, yet these are the things they are being taught and talked to about by everyone who can get to them. Whatever happened to letting kids have a childhood? Whatever happened to children being allowed to just be kids? This onslaught of the world towards our children can be both confusing and overwhelming. If we are not careful, the world will get to them and the culture will seek to indoctrinate them with its anti-Christian views. Our children need us. They need to be able to look to their father to provide hope in what can quickly be painted to them as a dark world.

I will give you an example of what I am talking about. The other day, my son Jacob asked me to go on a field trip with his class as a chaperon. Part of the trip was lunch at a restaurant with all the children and some other parents. Once the kids were settled, the adults chose a table and sat down together. The conversation quickly moved to cell phones for kids. Many of the parents had already given their children iPhones. When asked, I admitted we had not given Jacob a phone, and we were not intending to until he was much older. Immediately, I received a bunch of criticism about our decision. Parents were pleading with me about how Jacob would be left out because that is how all the boys communicate. I was told it would be hard for him to develop friendships because he couldn't communicate with his classmates outside of school. Another parent told me we needed to have a way to track him to know where he was at all times. One proclaimed that this was a total safety issue, and a good parent would make sure their kids always had a way to be reached. I responded to all of it. I informed them that we could set up time with any of the kids who would like to hang out with Jacob. God forbid kids actually meet up and have real conversations and experiences together rather than staring at a phone for hours texting each other aimlessly. As far as the benefits of knowing where my child was, I explained to them that he was either at school, with us, or he was with someone we trusted who had a means to communicate with us. Then, it was my turn to pose a few questions. I asked them if they knew what their children were looking at on the phone they had access to all day and night. I asked them if they knew that their child could find porn in about three seconds on Snapchat, TikTok or any of the other apps they were allowed to have. I told them the average age of a child that is exposed to porn is six-years old these days. How are they seeing it at that young of an age? They have access to it, that's how. We are the ones who have given it to them. Most of them didn't even have things like Covenant Eyes installed to ensure they were protected.

This is just one example, but it is a good one. We are supposed to be the one who stands between the world and our children. We are the ones who are supposed to make decisions that keep our children not only safe, but keep them on the road to virtue and holiness. Those parents gave me all the excuses in the world except the real one. They didn't want their kids to be the only ones without it. They didn't want their kids to be left out or labeled a loser because they didn't have one. We are not supposed to give in to the world. We are supposed to stand against it. Jacob and I had a conversation about why we didn't think he needed a phone. I shared with him the dangers of a kid having unsupervised access to the world like that. I explained to him that even great tools like Covenant Eyes couldn't prohibit functions and searches in some apps. I shared with him how quickly one can become addicted to a device and become consumed by it. He didn't like the fact that he wasn't getting a phone, and that's ok. In the end, he understood this is about his mom and dad keeping his best interest at heart.

This is what hope looks like. Jesus didn't conform to the pressures of the world or the narrative of the culture. He stood up against it and gave hope to others to do the same. That is what we are to do as fathers. Fatherhood isn't about a popularity contest or being your kid's best friend. It is about making the hard decisions that keep them safe and keep them walking in the light of Christ so that they can eventually be that light for their kids and the next generation. We are examples of Christ and agents of hope. Let's be an example for our children that is set apart from the world and its pressures. Let's be that place where they can come to for refuge in a tough world. This week, look for the ways you can exemplify what it looks like to have hope in Christ to your children. In the end, you will be glad you did.

WEEK 3: HOPE AND MY CHILDREN

FEBRUARY 15, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"We can therefore hope in the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love him and do his will."

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1821

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 8:14-21

Now they had forgotten to bring bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And he cautioned them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." And they discussed it with one another, saying, "We have no bread." And being aware of it, Jesus said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

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HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

WEEK 3: HOPE AND MY CHILDREN

FEBRUARY 16, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Pray with great confidence, with confidence based upon the goodness and infinite generosity of God and upon the promises of Jesus Christ. God is a spring of living water which flows unceasingly into the hearts of those who pray."

— St. Louis de Montfort

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 8:22-26

And they came to Beth-sa'ida. And some people brought to him a blind man, and begged him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" And he looked up and said, "I see men; but they look like trees, walking." Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly. And he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

[illegible]

WEEK 3: HOPE AND MY CHILDREN

FEBRUARY 17, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song."

— Pope St. John Paul II

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 8:27-33

And Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesare'a Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Eli'jah; and others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." And he charged them to tell no one about him. And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men."

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

[illegible]

WEEK 3: HOPE AND MY CHILDREN

FEBRUARY 18, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“God would never inspire me with desires which cannot be realized; so in spite of my littleness, I can hope to be a saint.”

— St. Therese of Lisieux

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 8:34–9:1

And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” And he said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

[illegible]

WEEK 3: HOPE AND MY CHILDREN

FEBRUARY 19, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

— John 3:16

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 9:2-13

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Eli'jah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is well that we are here; let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah." For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." And suddenly looking around they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of man should have risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what the rising from the dead meant. And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Eli'jah must come?" And he said to them, "Eli'jah does come first to restore all things; and how is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I tell you that Eli'jah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

[illegible]

WEEK 3: HOPE AND MY CHILDREN

FEBRUARY 20, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"An act of love, a voluntary taking on oneself of some of the pain of the world, increases the courage and love and hope of all."

— Dorothy Day



GOSPEL

LK 6:27-38

"But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

[illegible][illegible]

WEEK 3: HOPE AND MY CHILDREN

FEBRUARY 21, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

— Isaiah 40:31



GOSPEL

MK 9:14-29

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd about them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, "What are you discussing with them?" And one of the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY CHILDREN TODAY?

WEEK 4 REFLECTION:

HOPE AND MY NEIGHBOR

Today, our world is desperate for hope. It seems like the devil has been throwing everything at us that he has. We have been hit with a pandemic. We have been hit with continual sexual scandals in the church. We have been let down by leadership. We have seen riots and hate groups rise up in an attempt to overthrow Christianity and any sense of morality that is left in the world. We are constantly under attack from “the woke” and those who seek to cancel us if we don’t agree. In a lot of ways we can feel like a modern day Job, suffering pain after pain and wondering if it will ever come to an end. The good news is, it will. It did for Job, and it will for us. We just have to fan the flames of hope.

Oftentimes, we can get caught up in our situations and allow ourselves to fall into despair. We get to a place where we feel like there is no hope and no way out. When this happens, it is hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We begin to think there is no possible way for a different outcome. How quickly we forget that others have been through similar troubles and tragedies, and they made it through them. As a disciple of Christ, we have to look to Jesus and what he did and what he said about these types of dark situations. We all face these kinds of issues, and they are often referred to as the storms of life. Well, Jesus faced a storm or two in His life. We all remember the disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee and the massive storm coming up out of nowhere. The disciples were freaked out. It had to be a ridiculously massive storm for men like Peter, James, and John to be afraid. They spent their whole lives on the sea. While the storm raged on, Jesus slept in the stern of the boat. The disciples rushed to Him, woke Him up, and questioned why he wasn’t worried about it. Jesus rebuked the wind and the storm died down. He then asked the disciples why they were terrified. He questioned their faith. This is a powerful lesson for us. The disciples got caught up in the storm and forgot who was in the boat with them. Hope itself was in the boat with them. Even though it was frightening and seemed as if they were not going to get through it, Jesus was in their boat. How often do we forget that Jesus is with us in all things? Jesus has promised us that the gates of hell will not prevail against him. Storms are going to come. The world is going to get darker. We have to remember that Jesus will be there right through it all. This is where our hope has to be. This is where we get the strength to move forward and meet the challenges of the world, the flesh, and the devil head on. We don’t meet them with our strength, but with His. He is and will always be victorious.

This is what we are here for. We are here to bring others to the hope we have come to know in the person of Jesus Christ. We are to be His hands and feet in the world. In order to be successful, we have to bring them hope. We have to bring it to them in the pandemic. We have to bring it to them by modeling the goodness of the Church and its people. We have to bring our neighbors hope by living our lives differently than those who are walking the wide road to destruction. We have to meet hate with love. Boldly living the Christian life is what gives hope to others. Jesus Christ is our hope.

WEEK 4: HOPE AND MY NEIGHBOR

FEBRUARY 22, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

— 1 Peter 1:3

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MT 16:13-19

FEAST OF THE CHAIR OF SAINT PETER, APOSTLE

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Eli'jah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: HOPE AND MY NEIGHBOR

FEBRUARY 23, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Let us then persevere unceasingly in our hope, and in the pledge of our righteousness, that is in Christ Jesus."

— **St. Polycarp of Smyrna**



SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 9:38-40

MEMORIAL OF SAINT POLYCARP, BISHOP AND MARTYR

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us."

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: HOPE AND MY NEIGHBOR

FEBRUARY 24, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Jesus is living next to you, in the brothers and sisters with whom you share your daily existence."

— Pope St. John Paul II



SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 9:41-50

For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward. "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. For every one will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: HOPE AND MY NEIGHBOR

FEBRUARY 25, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Live in faith and hope, though it be in darkness, for in this darkness God protects the soul. Cast your care upon God for you are His and He will not forget you. Do not think that He is leaving you alone, for that would be to wrong Him.”

— St. John of the Cross



GOSPEL

MK 10:1-12

And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again; and again, as his custom was, he taught them. And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to put her away.” But Jesus said to them, “For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: HOPE AND MY NEIGHBOR

FEBRUARY 26, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

— Lamentations 3:24

 SAY THE PRAYER FOR HOPE

GOSPEL

MK 10:13-16

And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

[illegible]

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: HOPE AND MY NEIGHBOR

FEBRUARY 27, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Lord, help me to live this day, quietly, easily. To lean upon Thy great strength, trustfully, restfully. To wait for the unfolding of Thy will, patiently, serenely. To meet others, peacefully, joyously. To face tomorrow, confidently, courageously.”

— St. Francis of Assisi



GOSPEL

LK 6:39-45

He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye. “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper is oriented vertically.

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

WEEK 4: HOPE AND MY NEIGHBOR

FEBRUARY 28, 2022

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Hope is simply a disposition of the mind which sets bounds to the passions."

— St. Thomas Aquinas



GOSPEL

MK 10:17-27

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO ME IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF HOPE

HOW HAVE I SHOWN HOPE IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY NEIGHBOR TODAY?

LITANY OF HUMILITY

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart,
Hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being extolled,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being honored,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being praised,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being preferred
to others,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being consulted,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being approved,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being humiliated,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being despised,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of suffering rebukes,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being calumniated,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being forgotten,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being ridiculed,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being wronged,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being suspected,
Deliver me, Jesus.

That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That, in the opinion of the world, others
may increase and I may decrease,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be chosen and I set aside,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be praised and
I unnoticed,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be preferred to me
in everything,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may become holier than I,
provided that I may become as holy as
I should,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

THE LITANY OF TRUST

From the belief that I have to earn
Your love,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear that I am unlovable,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the false security that I have what
it takes,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear that trusting You will leave
me more destitute,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From all suspicion of Your words
and promises,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the rebellion against childlike
dependency on You,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From refusals and reluctances in
accepting Your will,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From anxiety about the future,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From resentment or excessive
preoccupation with the past,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From restless self-seeking
in the present moment,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From disbelief in Your love and presence,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being asked to give
more than I have,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the belief that my life has no
meaning or worth,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of what love demands,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From discouragement,

Deliver me, Jesus.

That You are continually holding me
sustaining me, loving me,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That Your love goes deeper than my sins
and failings, and transforms me,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That not knowing what tomorrow brings is
an invitation to lean on You,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That you are with me in my suffering,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That my suffering, united to Your own, will
bear fruit in this life and the next,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You will not leave me orphan, that You
are present in Your Church,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That Your plan is better than anything else,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You always hear me and in Your
goodness always respond to me,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You give me the grace to accept
forgiveness and to forgive others,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You give me all the strength I need for
what is asked,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That my life is a gift,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You will teach me to trust You,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You are my Lord and my God,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That I am Your beloved one,

Jesus, I trust in you.

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also. Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by His Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities. O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness. As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. **Amen.**



JUST A GUY
IN THE PEW