

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

There are three essential virtues that we receive through the grace of baptism. They are faith, hope and charity. By God's grace we are given the capacity to believe, hope and love in a supernatural way. However, we must cooperate with God's grace by choosing to believe, hope and love. Below is a good article about choosing to hope.

With my prayers,
Fr. Conley

God is calling you to be a prisoner of Hope

by Joyce Meyer

I used to be one of the most negative people I knew. My motto was, "If I don't expect anything good to happen, then I won't be disappointed when it doesn't." However, God's way of seeing things is just the opposite! He wants us to live our lives filled with hope, expecting Him to do something great at any moment.

What is hope? One definition of "hope" is "a favourable and confident expectation."

It's a positive attitude and the happy anticipation that something good is going to happen.

Real hope is not a wishy-washy, vague "let's just wait and see what happens" attitude, but it's believing and trusting that what God promised, He will do. God is just looking for opportunities to be good to His children and He wants us to expect and look forward to it.

The Bible says that hope is the anchor of our soul (see Heb. 6:19). When things look dark and we don't have an answer, that's when hope kicks in to remind us that our new beginning is right around the corner. For instance, when it looks like everybody *else* is getting blessed and we're tired and feel like giving up, it's *hope* that steadies our heart and helps us hold on to our faith in God's promise.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, hope is described as a helmet. So, what we *think* must be pretty important. Our attitude and what we're *expecting* has everything to do with what we're thinking and saying!

I encourage you to take control of your thoughts and words first thing every morning. When you wake up in the morning, don't settle for thoughts like, Well, I guess I'll try to make it through another day. Instead, anticipate good things from God. Think and declare things like:

"God, thank You for this day! I know that You love me and You have a good plan for me today. Apart from You, I can do nothing, but in Christ, I can do whatever I need to do. And with Your help, I am going to have a good attitude and positive thoughts." Then expect your breakthrough and new beginning. Say, "Today could be the day!"

It's important to realize that we can't live by how we feel if we want to have a positive, hope-filled life. When

negative feelings come, if we don't give in to them and feed them, they will die.

So, don't allow yourself to get caught in the trap of waiting to *feel* hopeful, but instead, decide to *be* full of hope. When you make a conscious decision to think positive, faith-filled thoughts throughout the day, your feelings will eventually catch up with your decision.

God's Just Waiting to Amaze You

Several years ago, I asked the Lord, "Why don't I have exciting, special things happen in my life anymore?" God spoke to my heart and said, "Joyce, I still do those things all the time. You have just gotten used to it." You see, God wants us to live *amazed* by His goodness in our lives... to actively take notice of the truly wonderful things He does for us. Why? Because when we live amazed, we will never be without hope! Let's look at the story of Abraham.

God had blessed Abraham abundantly. However, there was one thing that he and his wife, Sarah, didn't have—a child. Abraham said, "Lord God, what reward will You give me, since I am [leaving this world] childless...?" And the Lord brought Abram outside [his tent into the night] and said, 'Look now toward the heavens and count the stars—if you are able to count them. Then He said to him, 'So [numerous] shall your descendants be' (Genesis 15:2, 5 AMP).

Although Abraham's circumstances looked hopeless, the Lord brought him out of his tent to amaze him and remind him that He can do the impossible.

I believe we can spend too much time "in our tent," looking at our own problems. That's why the Bible says to look away from all that will distract unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith (see Heb. 12:2). Every time we decide to pray, read God's Word or simply dwell on the great things He has done for us in the past, it produces hope. And, like Abraham, we soon begin thinking, *Wow, maybe He can do this for me!*

When times are tough and you feel discouraged, it's time to step outside the tent and see what God has to say. When you do, you'll find that He is just waiting to amaze you.

God is good. (All the time!) And He has a good plan for each of our lives. No matter what may be going on right now, God's plan is unfolding. In the meantime, Rom. 12:12 (NLT) tells us to "Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. "I think that's good advice, especially in times when it feels like we've been waiting and waiting ... and waiting for something to happen in our lives. Hope is vital in times like these and it will keep us looking ahead, anticipating, expecting whatever it is we're *hoping* for.

Over the years I've learned how to lock myself up in a *prison* of hope, knowing that God has nothing but His best planned for me. He promised me things concerning my ministry and my life. And hope is what helped me hold on in those early years when it got hard.

As I grew in my relationship with God, I learned how to trust Him, how to stand on His Word and how to stand my ground in prayer when it got tough. Today, my

outlook on life is completely different from what it was many years ago. Now, I enjoy my life, and I encourage others to enjoy theirs as well. Jesus died for us to live an abundant, fulfilling life. And hope is the confident, favorable expectation of the life we can have in Him.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT-Lent begins in just 4 Weeks on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. Happy Ashes!

THIS LENT, HOW ABOUT GETTING A GIFT RATHER THAN GIVING SOMETHING UP? So we are inviting you to mark your calendars now to receive **The GIFT: A Life in the Spirit Course**. Over 200 people participated in this six-session and for many of them it was a life-changing experience. In fact, it was such a great experience for so many, that ten other parishes in Southern Maryland have asked us to help them present the program this year. This is an inspiring and practical series, aimed at people of all ages, to help them encounter the Holy Spirit and empower them to share their faith. **THE SIX SESSIONS WILL MEET ON THURSDAYS FROM 6:30-8:30PM** and will include dinner.

There will also be a **Sunday morning session** which meets from 11:15-1pm which will include lunch. **The GIFT series begins on THURSDAY, February 22nd. The cost of the series is \$10. You can sign up in the foyer or by contacting Fr. Conley at 301-870-2220 ext 13 or at frconley@comcast.net.**

INDIVIDUAL UNBOUND MINISTRY PRAYER

Do you long for freedom but feel unable to receive it? Do past sins, hurts, or memories weigh you down? On **Saturday February 3rd, 2018** there will be trained teams available to provide individual prayer using the Unbound Model of prayer at **The Church of the Resurrection's school** in Ellicott City. Unbound Prayer is based on 5 scriptural keys that help you unlock those areas of your life where you want to receive greater freedom & spiritual growth. If you would like to schedule an appointment or want more information, please contact Dan Gahagan by **January 29th** at unboundministrymaryland@gmail.com. We ask that you read at least the first 7 chapters of the book *Unbound*, by Neal Lozano prior to receiving prayer (available at www.Amazon.com OR www.heartofthefather.com.)

Come to our new faith formation series **SONS & DAUGHTERS OF GOD**

This series meets on the second and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:30-8:30 in the hall. The cost is \$10 for the series and includes dinner before each session. If you can't come to each session come to the ones that you can. Our presentation **this** Thursday, January 25, is on the essential role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. You

may sign up in the foyer or by contacting Father Conley at 301-870-2220, ext. 13 or frconley@comcast.net

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN CARDINAL WUERL in honoring the memory of enslaved men and women who, during the period when slavery was legal, was buried in unmarked graves throughout what is now the Archdiocese of Washington. This special Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, February 3, 2018 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at 5:15pm.

CARDINAL'S APPEAL – NEXT WEEKEND A TIME FOR REFLECTION

A significant gift to the Cardinal's Appeal will touch the lives of many others in a very positive way. As you review the work enabled by your contribution, please reflect on God's gifts to you. He has given you all that you have. Your gifts to our parish, to the archdiocese, and to the work of the Church throughout the world should be given in gratitude or the continuing gifts that God gives you. Thank you for your prayerful consideration and generous response!

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

SUN: 8am Parishioners, 10am Taylor Halbleib, 12N: Paul Therres, **MON:** 8:00am Joyce Wood, **TUES:** 8am Joseph L. Chapman, **WED:** 8am Benjamin M. Edelen, **THURS:** 8am Mary T. Edelen, **FRI:** 9:30am Tom Keelan, **SAT:** 9am Joseph L. Chapman, 4pm Leo & Dorothy Istvan.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY

PRAYERS: Mary Bowes, Frances Card, Joe Cross, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Arlene Gandolfi, Martha Gehring, Judy Istvan-Windsor, Irma Johnson, Regina Kijesky, Marie Knobel, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Maurice Long, Liz Marcus, Jim Middleton, Mary Emma Middleton, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Brian Myers, Lenora Proctor, Joseph Quade, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Ben Stark, Edna Sweeney, Lisa Thompson, Beth Weise, Tim Welch, Brice Zimmer.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND, \$8,066.06. The unidentified donations totaled \$667.56. We received \$57.00 for our School Support.