

Reflection

Sisters of St. Francis of Mary Immaculate
Joliet, IL

Jubilee 2025

By: Sr. Marianne Saieg, OSF — June 21, 2025

This is the Jubilee Year that began with Pope Francis opening the Holy Doors and declaring this a year of HOPE. The theme is “Pilgrims of Hope” for a world suffering the impact of war, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. The grace of this Jubilee year is to reawaken in all of us, the call to be Pilgrims of Hope.

Our Liturgy today celebrates our Jubilee and all gathered here, and our livestream Community. We celebrate those seen and unseen, our loved ones who have gone before who continue to guide us, with invisible hands.

Macrina Wiederkehr, a Benedictine Sister, author, and poet, wrote about hope entitled: A TREE FULL OF ANGELS, where she says, simply and profoundly: “Hope trails me like a best friend.”

While considering thoughts for this Reflection, I consulted with our Jubilarians about what this theme of HOPE means for them. And I quote them: My hope is for everlasting peace! Hope is a stirring that yearns for something more... Hope leads me to re-believe in the promises of God. Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire, needed to make us strong, resilient... Hope is the Source of life that has no ending. Hope is what keeps us going! Today our Scriptures and these words from our Jubilarians are salted with HOPE!

The Book of Jeremiah was written when the Israelites were in conflict and the Jews were

deported to Babylon. As we consider the context of this Scripture it sounds familiar to us, like the context of our lives today. The people were lamenting their situation of being without a home, proper food or even their familiar languages. And God says: “I have a Plan for you. You will have a future filled with HOPE.” This is being proclaimed while they have lost everything and were in trauma. And there it is: the promise. In the midst of turmoil, in the midst of loss, the promise of a Plan...I will be with you and I am with you, all the time. This is the way of the Lord. We need to be aware, awake enough to find the Word of God alive in our lives as we live it, when all seems lost.

How do we do this? We seek immediate resolve and answers. Our resolve lies within us and in the belief in the Promises of a loving God. We get up, start our day and walk on. We land on both feet and wonder, at the end of any given day, how did that happen? It’s those invisible hands again, the ones we referred to earlier. We are surrounded with love, and love shows up in our deeds. Our part is to do the deeds of love.

The Plan is for our goodness, our wholeness and this takes many shapes. We are given promises from God who speaks to us today and tells us, “I have a Plan for you.”

As we look into the Gospel of the beloved One, John, we hear a grand part of the Plan being revealed: Here it is! “Love each other, love each other as I loved you” and that isn’t always easy. Jesus loved unconditionally. In the rub of our

daily lives, we are urged to love each other, without condition, like Jesus loved. In our wounded, broken world we are being called to love, to reconcile, to have no conditions in our loving or our forgiving. Tall order to say the least. Yet possible, with God. Remain in this love. Abide with it, stay with it, hang on to it and dally daily in this love, as Jesus did.

Our hope dims as we seek resolve in conflicts and at the same time, we want to believe God is working compassionately on our behalf in every event of our lives. We are here to till the soil of our good earth in our daily lives in our corner of the world. What is the context of our lives today? It is in this context that we are to live out the Gospel message.

Scriptures were written with the inspiration of God. These same Scriptures are alive and active and written for us in the here and now of our times. The Gospels are relevant to our lives and may they resonate deeply within our souls. Penned thousands of years ago and here we are today reflecting on the meaning of our lives, right now. We pray from an ancient text that becomes new. We hear again the promise of HOPE in Paul's letter to the Romans and to us. "Hope does not disappoint."

We cannot all travel to the war-torn countries, happening as we speak, we cannot assist all our suffering sisters and brothers in need, but we can be a balm to the broken among us. We can be channels of love and instruments of peace in the world we live in right here - right now. Our Scriptures call us to accept, embrace and recognize the need to tear down walls between us. To gather the unaccepted into our lives and into our hearts. In mercy and love, in the eyes of Jesus, all are welcome. This is how we are summoned to live in our world and how God promises to assist us to make it work.

We turn to our prophets, poets, mystics, wisdom figures, and to each other to find words of hope, to interpret the plan God has for our lives. We each have a mission. May our mission be our ministry. Our families be our domestic churches. Our meetings are the place where we listen, console, lift up and give food for thought to each other.

Emily Dickinson, a poet, adopted life as a hermit and a "stationary pilgrim." Emily captures an image of what I think the action of hope might look like. These are her very words: "Not knowing when the dawn will come, I open every door." Imagine running around your house, opening every door with the expectation that the light will dawn as the door swings open. With an eagerness to know somewhere, in this space, light will appear. Our hope allows us to run around looking for it.

May we storm the heavens with our intercessions for peace. Peace in our hearts, Peace in our world and Peace throughout the entire universe. May we believe that in our corner of this good earth, there lives and breathes a lively nugget of hope in each of us. We take heart in a God-promised Plan for our present time and for our future.

And lastly, be lamp lighters, with intention. Keep vigil. Be an eternal flame lit to bring hope where there is none. Light oil lamps, fire pits in your back yards and candles for those in need. Stay constant. Be instruments of hope.

Amen, Alleluia!

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