

Homily on Hope: “Anchored in the Everlasting”

My friends, hope is an interesting thing. It's kind of like the Wi-Fi signal—when it's strong, you feel connected, clear, and sure. But when it's weak or lost, suddenly everything feels shaky. This Sunday's readings remind us of our ultimate “signal strength” for hope, no matter what chaos we face.

In the first reading from Daniel, the prophet talks about a time of “unmatched distress,” but with a twist: God's people are promised salvation. Then in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus tells us that, even in times of cosmic disorder, His words and promises won't pass away. These are timeless words to help anchor us in hope. But what is this hope? Why can we trust it? And how do we strengthen it?

The Nature of Hope in the Christian Life

Christian hope, unlike worldly hope, is not mere “wishful thinking.” It's a confident expectation based on God's promises. St. Augustine wrote, “Hope has two beautiful daughters: anger and courage—anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain as they are.” Christian hope doesn't deny the darkness but courageously trusts in God's light. As St. Paul put it, hope “does not disappoint” because it's rooted in God's love poured into our hearts (Romans 5:5).

In this Sunday's readings, we are reminded that hope has a foundation, a direction, and an endpoint. The foundation of our hope is God's love and promises. The direction is toward eternal life with Him. The endpoint is Heaven, where, as Psalm 16 beautifully puts it, we will find “fullness of joy” in His presence.

Hope When Things Look Dark (Daniel 12:1-3)

Daniel speaks about distress but also of those “shining like stars” in God's glory. This isn't a fleeting or passing “shine,” but an eternal one, a glow of hope in a world often darkened by confusion and despair. St. John Chrysostom describes this hope as “the anchor of the soul,” strong and sure, and one that can sustain us in the hardest of times. In fact, this “starry shine” symbolizes the eternal hope that remains when everything else falls apart.

An image for this is like the North Star. Even in the darkest night, sailors used the North Star to navigate because it was constant. Our hope in God, like that star, is a constant that doesn't shift with the winds of the world.

The “Signs of the Times” and Trust in God's Promises (Mark 13:24-32)

In the Gospel, Jesus talks about darkened skies, stars falling, and seasons changing—signs that sound like the end of all things. But Jesus also says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” St. Teresa of Avila humorously reminds us here, saying, “Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, though your impatience may make doubtful

what is certain." She gently pokes at our impatience, encouraging us to hope in God's word even when we feel uncertain.

Jesus' words remind us that His promises are fixed, even if everything else seems like it's changing or falling apart. Imagine a child in a thunderstorm clinging to their father. The storm may rage, but the child has hope because they know Dad's there. Our heavenly Father's promises are our reason to cling, even in life's storms.

Analogy and Acrostic: "HOPE"

Let's use an acrostic to capture today's lesson on hope:

- **H**old fast: Like sailors holding onto an anchor, we're called to hold fast to God's promises, which never fail.
- **O**pen our hearts: Hope means letting God's peace fill us, even when we face tough circumstances.
- **P**ersevere: Just as athletes keep going, our faith calls us to stay on course, trusting that God will work all things for good.
- **E**ternal: Hope isn't temporary; it stretches all the way to Heaven, where we're promised "fullness of joy."

Hope as a Light

So, how do we live out this hope? We keep our eyes on Christ, remembering He is both **our path and destination**. When things feel hopeless, we remember the words of St. Augustine: "Hope has two beautiful daughters." Let us allow hope's daughters, **anger** at injustice and **courage** for change, to stir us to make this world a little more like Heaven.

As we go forward today, let's strengthen our hope, remembering it's more than a feeling; it's a gift rooted in God's unchanging promise. So, whether we feel like that lost Wi-Fi signal or like stars shining in the night, we are anchored by a hope that will not disappoint. And one day, God promises, we'll find that "fullness of joy" in His presence, where hope will at last become sight. Amen.