

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

This weekend I had one of those conversations with a friend where it starts with one difficult issue in life and then spirals to everything that is wrong with the world at the moment. We were on our way out for a fun day in London (in part to see the beautiful Angel Christmas lights down Regent Street), so perhaps not the best way to start the day, however the conversation eventually led itself to the idea of hope. We discussed where people find their hope in difficult times, where is the hope in the world at the moment? With discussions of cost of living, war, energy blackouts, school budgets, it can feel difficult to find any hope. Our conversation led to what we mean by hope and the inevitably where we found our own hope.



The dictionary definition of hope is 'a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen'. This definition feels like it is more about wishful thinking: you want something to happen, but it may or may not happen. You have a desire, but desire does not necessarily lead to fulfilment - this I believe can lead to disappointment and possibly an even greater feeling of hopelessness.

Our conversation led us to what the Bible says about hope:

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. (Hebrews 11:1 NLT)

Rather than wishful thinking, hope here is linked to faith and that there is absolute confidence that it will happen. This is not just about everyday things we hope for but having hope in God. So, what is faith? Faith simply means believing in something real even though we cannot prove it yet with tangible evidence. For example, when God told Noah to build an ark because He was going to destroy the world with a flood, Noah had not seen an ark or a flood before. However, as he received the instructions on how to build the ark, he got some ideas on what the ark would look like, but he did not know how it would work. In spite of his lack of understanding, he believed in God. Noah had faith in God that everything that God was telling him would come to pass.



Just like Noah, we may not fully understand all that is going on in the world at the moment, we may not understand what is going on in our schools or even our personal lives, but our certain hope is that God has got this. For me on days where I don't understand I have to remind myself that I can have a sure and certain hope that that God does, so I don't need to because God has got this!

If, like me, you find music helpful you may enjoy the following song that highlights this very point <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcK3R9KICfc>.

Prayer

Father,
Hope overcomes,
Hope heals,
Hope restores,
Hope inspires,
Hope conquers,
Hope frees,
Hope is your gift to the world,
Thank you
Amen

from Lynsey Norris—Assistant Diocesan
Director of Education

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