

## Hope - Reflection for November



A word that we meet often in the Scriptures is 'hope'. Frequently the psalms encourage us to hope in God Remember your word to your servant, in which you have made me hope ( Ps. 119:49): Jeremiah reassures us that God will give us a future full of hope (Jer. 29:11) Job tells us There is always hope for a tree, even if it is cut down that it will sprout again (Job. 14:7) Of course the entire Gospel conveys a hope-filled message of salvation and new life. And Paul reminds us that hope does not disappoint us (Rom. 5:5).

This same spirit of hope characterises all Benedict's teaching. He begins by setting the tone for the whole Rule: we hope to impose nothing harsh or burdensome (Prol. 46) And again, as we pursue our journey of faith Place your hope in God alone (R.B. 4:41). Quoting from Psalm 37 Benedict says: Make known your way to the Lord and hope in him' (Ps. 37:5 R.B. 7:45). When it comes to material things Benedict stipulates that everyone is to receive what they need from the mother or father of the monastery: They may expect (i.e. hope) that everything they need in their lives will be supplied by the superior of the community (R.B. 33:5)

Sometimes we are tempted to lose sight of hope. We live in a world that has often forgotten the concepts of goodness, beauty, truth, integrity. Daily, reports reach us of the most devastating sufferings of people who are the innocent victims of war, violence, and hatred. Thousands of children die every day from malnutrition, hunger, or diseases that could be prevented by a more generous sharing of the world's resources. How can we convey a message of hope to these people? What can we do to help them? There are no easy answers to these immense problems. And even on our own doorstep, and within our own families, we find much that gives cause for deep concern.

There is one thing we can do however; we can hold these concerns in our hearts as we come to meditate. By that I do not mean that we should think about them, or even pray about them at the time of meditation. But because we truly meet Christ when we meditate our meditation

is of immense value - not only for ourselves - but for the whole world. In some inexplicable way we can contribute to the pursuit of peace throughout the universe, simply by sitting in silence and stillness, repeating our Word in faith and in love. It is a mystery how this happens, understood only in the light of faith.

Benedict's world was not too different from our own. Yet somehow he managed to find hope in an environment of corruption and despair, when everything seemed to be falling apart, politically, socially, and even within the Church. The entire Rule, like the Gospel, is hope filled, reassuring us that God is with us, even if the worst happens, and he will never abandon us.

With love to each one,  
Hilda OSB

Oblates

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