

Hope is a fundamental attitude

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Weekly Readings

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From Laurence Freeman OSB, “Hope,” THE SELFLESS SELF (New York: Continuum, 2000), pp. 151-154.

Hope is not a desire for anything. It is not day-dreaming about anything. It is the reverse mode of fantasy. Hope is a fundamental attitude or direction of consciousness. It is an outward turning. To be hopeful is to make the discovery that we are integral parts of something greater than ourselves, and that we are living with the energy of that complete reality. Hope is the outward turning of the self, whatever the difficulty of remaining outward-turning. Despair is the surrender of consciousness to the force of introversion. . . . Hope is an absolute, constant and unconditioned virtue. You cannot be hopeful only when things are going well. You need to be hopeful and, in a sense, to *choose* to be hopeful, however things go, whatever the inclination to sink back into self-consciousness, into the safe enclosure of the ego.

Hope is one of the virtues resulting from deep prayer. It is in deep prayer that we turn from self to God, the God who is “other” than ourselves but to whom we bear a likeness more striking than to our family or any human being. Hope is the aspiration to be totally at home. It is the strongest aspiration of our being.

After meditation: “From a Country Overlooked” by Tom Hennen in DARKNESS STICKS TO EVERYTHING (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2013), p. 74.

There are no creatures you cannot love.
A frog calling at God
from the moon-filled ditch
as you stand on the country road in the June night.
The sound is enough to make the stars weep
with happiness.
In the morning the landscape green
is lifted off the ground by the scent of grass.
The day is carried across its hours
without any effort by the shining insects
that are living their secret lives.
The space between the prairie horizons

makes us ache with its beauty.
Cottonwood leaves click in an ancient tongue
to the farthest cold dark in the universe.
The cottonwood also talks to you
of breeze and speckled sunlight.
You are at home in these
great empty places
along with red-winged blackbirds and sloughs.
You are comfortable in this spot
so full of grace and being
that it sparkles like jewels
spilled on water.

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