



Children's National.

**Reflections on the themes of HOPE
AND WISDOM**



**Chaplaincy Services
Office of InterFaith Pastoral
and Spiritual Care**

Hope and Hopelessness

William F. Lynch, S.J. writes in *Images of Hope-Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless*: "Part of reality belongs to hopelessness."

Real hope always exists on the edge of hopelessness. For it is important to acknowledge those parts of existence that are, indeed, hopeless. Appropriate hopelessness is the understanding that some things are quite impossible. As humans, we cannot hope to live forever; as an individual I cannot hope to change my race; I cannot hope to win a Nobel Prize in physics. Hope, in order to be Hope, excludes the impossible and takes heart in every possibility.

Hope has the ability to **wait** for the possible to show itself. When we, or someone we love, is ill, dying, in pain, or grieving, hope waits for the possible to become evident. When it becomes impossible (hopeless) to lessen pain, it becomes possible to learn a strength for living with pain. When it becomes impossible (hopeless) to prevent dying, it becomes possible to trust that death is a new beginning.

We each need to explore the truly impossibles and unimagined possibles that surround us, and stretch out our spirits to our Hope.

Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine

I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge.
That myth is more potent than history.
That dreams are more powerful than facts.
That hope always triumphs over experience.
That laughter is the only cure for grief.
And I believe that love is stronger than death.

Robert Fulghum



You are not here merely to make a living.
You are here in order to enable the world to live more
amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope
and achievement.
You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish
yourself if you forget the errand.

Woodrow Wilson

From the Morals of Seneca, 4 BCE - 65 CE

Wisdom is a right understanding, a faculty of discerning good from evil, what is to be chosen and what rejected; a judgment grounded upon the value of things, and not the common opinion of them. It sets a watch over our words and deeds, and makes us invincible by either good or evil fortune. It has for its object things past and things to come, things transitory and things eternal. It examines all the circumstances of time, and the nature and operation of the mind. It stands to philosophy as avarice to money — the one desires and the other is desired; the one is the effect and the reward of the other. To be wise is the use of wisdom, as seeing is the use of eyes, and speaking of the tongue. He that is perfectly wise is perfectly happy; nay, the very beginning of wisdom makes life easy to us. It is not enough to know this; we must print it in our minds by daily meditation, and so bring a good will to a good habit.



Words of Wisdom
by Anonymous

Carefully watch your thoughts
for they become your words.
Manage and watch your words
for they will become your actions.
Consider and judge your actions
for they will become your habits.
Acknowledge and watch your habits
for they shall become your character.
Understand and embrace your character
for it becomes your destiny and your dreams.





William Blake's Joy and Woe:

Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine,
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.

It is right it should be so;
Man was made for joy and woe;
And when this we rightly know,
Through the world we safely go.

Zeera Charnoe,
from his book: [The Soul of a Poet-Philosopher](#)

STARS SHINE

Stars shine
not only that the universe may know they're
there
but that in shining
they may extend their care

Their light
is not only a light
illuminating darkest sky
but that which shines upon the soul

Photosynthesis of spirit
the work of starlight

Violets of the soul's realm
root themselves in earthly experiences
are watered by love
and shined upon by stars

they bloom



little prayer

Danez Smith

let ruin end here

let him find honey
where there was once a slaughter

let him enter the lion's cage
& find a field of lilacs

let this be the healing
& if not let it be



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"There is a Sufi story about a man who is so good that the angels ask God to give him the gift of miracles. God wisely tells them to ask him if that is what he would wish.

So the angels visit this good man and offer him first the gift of healing by hands, then the gift of conversion of souls, and lastly the gift of virtue. He refuses them all. They insist that he choose a gift or they will choose one for him. "Very well," he replies. "I ask that I may do a great deal of good without ever knowing it." The story ends this way:

The angels were perplexed. They took counsel and resolved upon the following plan: Every time the saint's shadow fell behind him it would have the power to cure disease, soothe pain, and comfort sorrow. As he walked, behind him the shadow made arid paths green, caused withered plants to bloom, gave clear water to dried up brooks, fresh color to pale children, and joy to unhappy men and women. The saint simply went about his daily life diffusing virtue as the stars diffuse light and the flowers scent, without ever being aware of it. The people respecting his humility followed him silently, never speaking to him about his miracles. Soon they even forgot his name and called him "the Holy Shadow."

Rachel Naomi Remen,
[Kitchen Table Wisdom:](#)
[Stories That Heal](#)



Look To this Day

Look to this day:
For it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course
Lie all the verities and realities
of your existence.

The bliss of growth,
The glory of action,
The splendour of
achievement
Are but experiences of time.

For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a
vision;
And today well-lived, makes
Yesterday a dream of
happiness
And every tomorrow a
vision of hope.

Look well therefore to this day;
Such is the salutation to the
ever-new dawn!



A star falls from the sky and into your hands.
Then it seeps through your veins and swims
inside your blood and becomes every part of
you. And then you have to put it back into the
sky. And it's the most painful thing you'll ever
have to do and that you've ever done. But what's
yours is yours. Whether it's up in the sky or here
in your hands. And one day, it'll fall from the sky
and hit you in the head real hard and that time,
you won't have to put it back in the sky again.

C. JoyBell C.

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton, Thoughts in Solitude

Resources provided by Chaplaincy Services, Office of
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For more information call 202-476-3321. If you are
in the hospital and would like a chaplain to visit you
please call 202-476-3070 and ask to have a chaplain
paged.