

Saved in Hope – (*Spe Salvi*) – Pope Benedict XVI – Paragraphs 30-31

30. Let us summarize what has emerged so far in the course of our reflections. Day by day, man experiences many greater or lesser hopes, different in kind according to the different periods of his life. Sometimes one of these hopes may appear to be totally satisfying without any need for other hopes. Young people can have the hope of a great and fully satisfying love; the hope of a certain position in their profession, or of some success that will prove decisive for the rest of their lives. When these hopes are fulfilled, however, it becomes clear that they were not, in reality, the whole. It becomes evident that man has need of a hope that goes further. It becomes clear that only something infinite will suffice for him, something that will always be more than he can ever attain. In this regard our contemporary age has developed the hope of creating a perfect world that, thanks to scientific knowledge and to scientifically based politics, seemed to be achievable. Thus Biblical hope in the Kingdom of God has been displaced by hope in the kingdom of man, the hope of a better world which would be the real “Kingdom of God”. This seemed at last to be the great and realistic hope that man needs. It was capable of galvanizing—for a time—all man’s energies. The great objective seemed worthy of full commitment. In the course of time, however, it has become clear that this hope is constantly receding. Above all it has become apparent that this may be a hope for a future generation, but not for me.

And however much “for all” may be part of the great hope—since I cannot be happy without others or in opposition to them—it remains true that a hope that does not concern me personally is not a real hope. It has also become clear that this hope is opposed to freedom, since human affairs depend in each generation on the free decisions of those concerned. If this freedom were to be taken away, as a result of certain conditions or structures, then ultimately this world would not be good, since a world without freedom can by no means be a good world. Hence, while we must always be committed to the improvement of the world, tomorrow’s better world cannot be the proper and sufficient content of our hope. And in this regard the question always arises: when is the world “better”? What makes it good? By what standard are we to judge its goodness? What are the paths that lead to this “goodness”?

31. Let us say once again: we need the greater and lesser hopes that keep us going day by day. But these are not enough without the great hope, which must surpass everything else. This great hope can only be God, who encompasses the whole of reality and who can bestow upon us what we, by ourselves, cannot attain. The fact that it comes to us as a gift is actually part of hope. God is the foundation of hope: not any god, but the God who has a human face and who has loved us to the end, each one of us and humanity in its entirety. His Kingdom is not an imaginary hereafter, situated in a future that will never arrive; his Kingdom is present wherever he is loved and wherever his love reaches us. His love alone gives us the possibility of soberly persevering day by day, without ceasing to be spurred on by hope, in a world which by its very nature is imperfect. His love is at the same time our guarantee of the existence of what we only vaguely sense and which nevertheless, in our deepest self, we await: a life that is “truly” life. Let us now, in the final section, develop this idea in more detail as we focus our attention on some of the “settings” in which we can learn in practice about hope and its exercise.

Doctrinal Statements -- US Catholic Catechism for Adults – pp 122-123

- The word *Church* is based on both the Greek word *ekklesia* and the Hebrew word *qahal*, which mean the gathering of the community. It was first applied to the people of Israel, whom God called into existence. The Church was planned and formed by God, who called together into one those who accepted the Gospel.
- The Father prepared for the Church through a series of covenant events described in the Old Testament. Jesus fulfilled the divine plan for the Church through his saving death and Resurrection. The Holy Spirit manifested the Church as a mystery of salvation.
- The Church is a visible society and a spiritual community; she is a hierarchical institution and the Body of Christ; she is an earthly Church and one filled with heavenly treasures. Hence the Church is a complex reality that has human and divine elements.

The reality of the mystery of the Church is expressed in a variety of ways as follows:

- The Church is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and instrument of our communion with God (cf. CCC, nos. 774-776).
- The Church is the People of God. “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.... Once you were ‘no people,’ / but now you are God’s people” (1 Pt 2:9-10). We become members of God’s People through faith and Baptism (cf. CCC, nos. 781-786).
- The Church is the Body of Christ. Christ is the head, and we are the members. In the unity of this Body, there is a diversity of members and roles, yet everyone is linked together by Christ’s love and grace, especially the poor, the suffering, and the persecuted (cf. CCC, nos. 787-795).
- The Church is the Bride of Christ. “Christ loved the Church and handed himself over [to death] for her that he might sanctify her” (Eph 5:25-26; cf. CCC, no. 796).
- The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. “We are the temple of the living God” (2 Cor 6:16; cf. 1 Cor 3:16-17, Eph 2:21; cf. CCC, nos. 797-801).
- The Church is a communion. The starting point of this communion is our union with Jesus Christ. This gives us a share in the communion of the Persons of the Trinity and also leads to a communion among men and women (cf. CCC, nos. 813, 948, 959).
- These truths about unity and communion in the Church call us to become a source of unity for all peoples.

The Updated Writings – The Saint – Chapter V -- Page 131

[Let No One Be Proud, but Boast in the Cross of the Lord]

Consider, O human being, in what great excellence the Lord God has placed you, for He created and formed you to the image of His beloved Son according to the body and to His likeness according to the Spirit.

And all creatures under heaven serve, know, and obey their Creator, each according to its own nature, better than you. And even the demons did not crucify Him, but you, together with them, have crucified Him and are still crucifying Him by delighting in vices and sins.

In what, then, can you boast? Even if you were so skillful and wise that you possessed *all knowledge*, knew how to interpret every *kind of language*, and to scrutinize heavenly matters with skill: you could not boast in these things. For, even though someone may have received from the Lord a special knowledge of the highest wisdom, one demon knew about heavenly matters and now knows more about those of earth than all human beings.

In the same way, even if you were more handsome and richer than everyone else, and even if you worked miracles so that you put demons to flight: all these things are contrary to you; nothing belongs to you; you can boast in none of these things.

But we can boast in our *weaknesses* and in carrying each day the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 17:11-19

On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”