

## **Signs of Hope for the Kingdom**

**The virtue of hope is God's gift to us at Baptism.  
Our union with the crucified and risen Jesus through Baptism  
makes us people of hope, purpose and vision.  
Our lives truly have meaning;  
they are signs of hope  
for a struggling world.**

### **Your Experience**

Can you name a time when you were able to give someone hope?

What does "Christ is risen" mean for you in your life?

### **What Vatican II Says**

... the laity go forth as powerful proclaimers of a faith in things to be hoped for,(205) when they courageously join to their profession of faith a life springing from faith. This evangelization, that is, this announcing of Christ by a living testimony as well as by the spoken word, takes on a specific quality and a special force in that it is carried out in the ordinary surroundings of the world.

*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), 36.*

For where Christianity pervades the entire mode of family life, and gradually transforms it, one will find there both the practice and an excellent school of the lay apostolate. In such a home husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children. The Christian family loudly proclaims both the present virtues of the Kingdom of God and the hope of a blessed life to come.

*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), 35.*

### **What the Catechism Says**

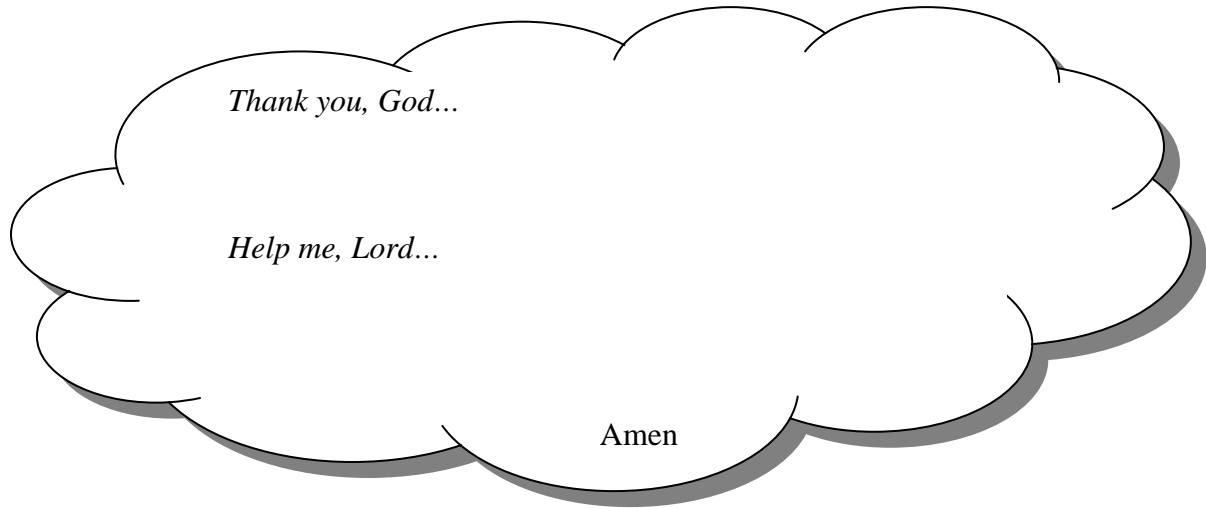
The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every [person]; it takes up the hopes that inspire man's [sic.] activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity. (CCC, 1818)

### **Your Experience**

Christian hope is about trust in God's promises. This trust enables us to expectantly *pray* and *work* for the fulfillment of God's promises and Reign our lives, communities and world. Can you name someone whose hope has helped you trust in God's promises?

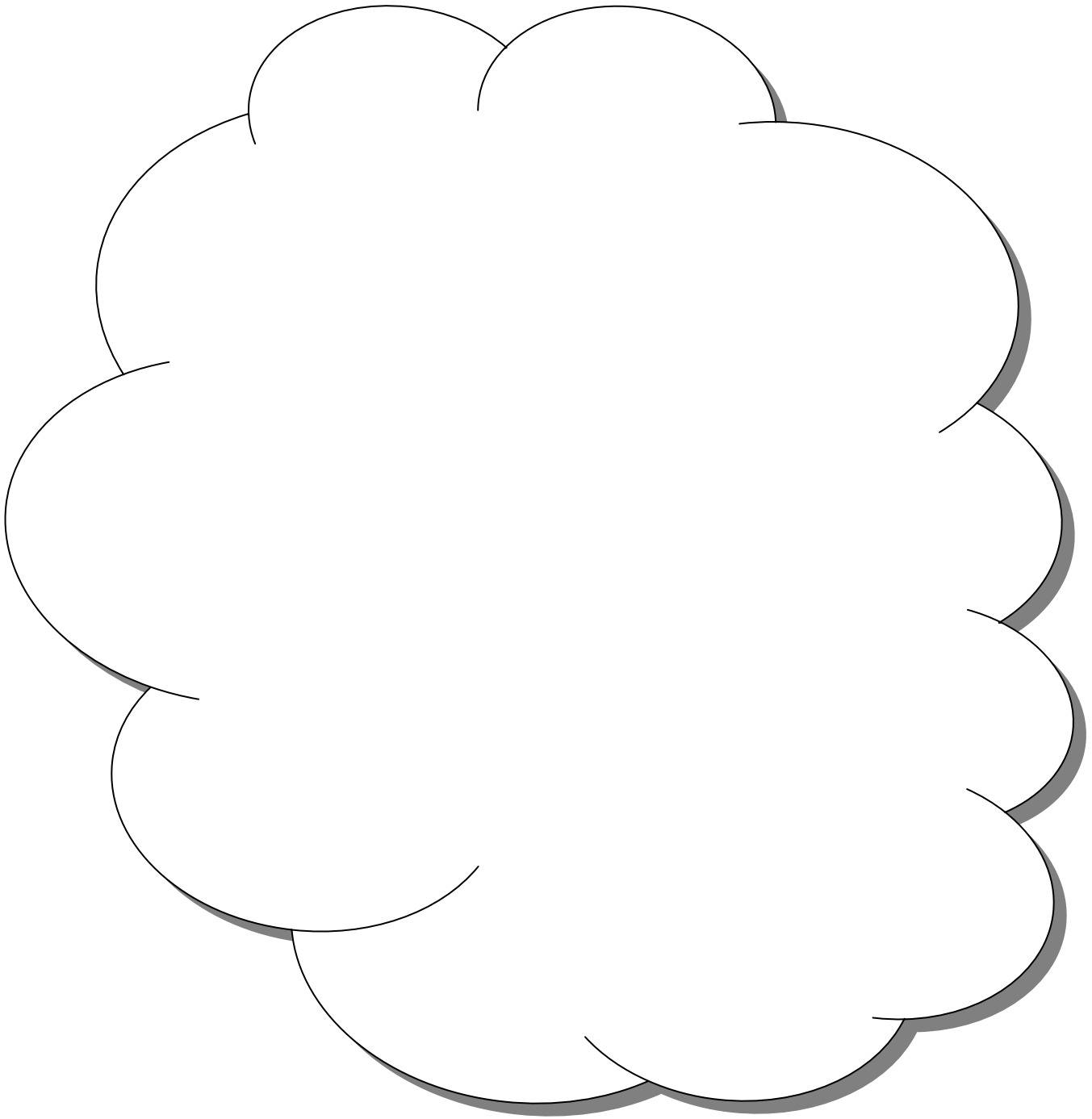
## **Praying Your Experience**

You have been reflecting on your life as a sign of hope for others.  
Please use the space below to bring to God what is in your heart.



### **Integrating Activity**

Draw an image or write a poem, word or phrase  
that reflects what it means for you  
to see your life in Christ as a sign of hope for others.



## Further Reading

The Church in America wishes to walk in hope, as the Synod Fathers declared: “With serene trust in the Lord of history, the Church prepares to cross the threshold of the Third Millennium freed from prejudice, hesitation, selfishness, fear or doubt, and convinced of the fundamental and primary service which she must provide as a testimony to her fidelity to God and to the men and women of the continent.” **Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America*, No. 75**

Let us go forward in hope! A new millennium is opening before the Church like a vast ocean upon which we shall venture, relying on the help of Christ. The Son of God, who became incarnate two thousand years ago out of love for humanity, is at work even today: we need discerning eyes to see this and, above all, a generous heart to become the instruments of his work. Did we not celebrate the Jubilee Year in order to refresh our contact with this living source of our hope? Now, the Christ whom we have contemplated and loved bids us to set out once more on our journey: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (*Mt 28:19*). The missionary mandate accompanies us into the Third Millennium and urges us to share the enthusiasm of the very first Christians: we can count on the power of the same Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost and who impels us still today to start out anew, sustained by the hope "which does not disappoint" (*Rom 5:5*). **Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, No. 58**

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. **Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi (On Christian Hope)*, 2007. No. 31.**

It is never too late to touch the heart of another, nor is it ever in vain. In this way we further clarify an important element of the Christian concept of hope. Our hope is always essentially also hope for others; only thus is it truly hope for me too. As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking: how can I save myself? We should also ask: what can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them too the star of hope may rise? Then I will have done my utmost for my own personal salvation as well. **Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi (On Christian Hope)*, 2007. No. 48.**

The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by—people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way. Who more than Mary could be a star of hope for us? With her “yes” she opened the door of our world to God himself; she became the living Ark of the Covenant, in whom God took flesh, became one of us, and pitched his tent among us (cf. *Jn 1:14*). **Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi (On Christian Hope)*, 2007. No. 49.**