

JESUS SOURCE OF OUR HOPE

1. Listen to the Word: *1Tm 1:1-2*

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, my true child in faith: grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. Remain in the Word

With these wonderful statements the Apostle Paul begins his letter to Timothy, his son in faith, immediately focusing on the fundamental teaching: Jesus Christ is the one who died and rose for the salvation of humanity (1 Tim 2:6). He, therefore, is our hope. The title "Jesus Christ" is familiar to the authors of the New Testament and the Christian liturgy, in that it clearly identifies the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God made man, sent by God for the salvation of humanity. However, Paul uses it several times in this letter in the inverted form "Christ Jesus" (1Tm 1:1-2 [3 times]; 1Tm 1:15, and 1Tm 2:5-6), to emphasize the messianic role of Jesus. He alone is the One awaited by all nations; He alone is the One sent in the fullest sense, therefore, He alone is the hope of all humanity (cf. Acts 9:22).

Jesus brings to completion these "semina Verbi"¹, He gives it breadth and depth, basing hope in God Himself, who is faithful, loving, and who fulfills His promises. As the only-begotten Son, Christ and Savior, He is "the mediator between God and humanity. He is the man Jesus Christ, who has given Himself for the redemption for everyone" (1 Tim 2:5-6).

Benedict XVI emphasizes the uniqueness of Christian hope, highlighting that it "is a Person", "has a face", "has a name".² In the Encyclical *Spe Salvi* he affirms that "God is the foundation of hope - not just any god, but that God who has a human face and has loved us to the end: each individual and humanity as a whole."³

Living in hope today is an invitation to experience deeply the personal and loving relationship with God in Jesus Christ. It is the decision to constantly put "*Christ at the center of our life and of the world, because He is our hope, the hope of the Church and of all humanity!*"⁴ Since He is the Living One, "everything that He touches becomes young, becomes new, and fills with life."⁵ We, therefore, are called to live in hope, that is, to connect our lives with that of Jesus Christ; to always be pilgrims of hope towards God and towards our neighbor.

The certainty that "nothing can ever separate us from the love of God" (Rm 8:39) is the anchor that firmly holds our life. God is always present, accompanies us, and loves us. He allows us to live with joy, give meaning to our existence, and transmit this hope to today's world.

With his ardent love for Christ, Saint Paul became a credible witness of unwavering hope and faithful love in God. He an Apostle by vocation, had the courage to renounce himself, to follow the will of the Lord, to love without reserve, to live and die for Him. He lived fully his mission to proclaim the Gospel of hope, remaining deeply attached to the saving mission of Jesus Christ.

¹ Cf. VATICAN II, Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, n.2; Decree *Ad Gentes*, nos. 11.18.

² Cf. GARCÍA GUILLEN Domingo, *Khuôn Mặt Hy Vọng: Thông điệp Spe Salvi của Đức Bênêđictô XVI trong bối cảnh Thần học hiện đại* [II Face of Hope: The message of *Spe Salvi* of Pope Benedict XVI in the context of modern theology], in TRUNG TÂM HỌC VĂN ĐA MINH, *Thời sự thần học* (2015)69, 36-62.

³ BENEDICT XVI, *Spe Salvi*, n.31.

⁴ MARTOGLIO Stefano, *Anchored in hope, pilgrims with the young*, *Strenna* 2025, p.5.

⁵ FRANCIS, *Christus Vivit*, n.1.

3. Illumined by the Word

Hope places us in deep communion with God, the meaning of our life, the One we ardently desire. Pope Francis writes, *"May it be for all a moment of living and personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, 'door' of salvation (cf. Jn 10:7.9); with Him, whom the Church has the mission to proclaim always, everywhere, and to all as 'our hope'."* (1 Tim 1:1)⁶

In the Salesian tradition, the dream of the Two Columns is a call for every son and daughter of Don Bosco to live in union with Jesus in the Eucharist and in devotion to Mary Help of Christians. These two pillars represent the solid foundation that gives strength to live daily one's vocation and mission in the world. Don Bosco deeply experienced the spiritual strength that comes from the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He lived constantly in the presence of God, as if he saw the Invisible, with a deep trust in divine providence. Following his example, we are called to celebrate life with joy and serenity, fully entrusting ourselves to Jesus and letting ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit. May our heart always be turned to God, "desiring the heavenly realities and directing our mind and spirit towards the things above" (cf. Col 3:1-2).

In the same way, Eucharistic spirituality left an indelible imprint on Mother Mazzarello's spiritual experience. The window of Valponasca and the paths of Mornese still evoke her ardent devotion and her intense desire to join Jesus. Mother Mazzarello often recommended to her sisters, "Live in intimate union with Jesus, work only to please Him" (L 22). She invited them find themselves in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the center of their life, lighting in the hearts of her sisters and young people the fire of faith, love, and hope.

Today, with a heart animated by an ardent love for God, for the Sisters in the community and for young people, each FMA in her own action - contemplation is called to actualize the spiritual experience of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello with fidelity and creativity. In this way, she will become a witness of hope, rooted in the eternal values that the life of faith gives, through the grace, mercy, and peace of which Saint Paul spoke to Timothy.

4. Pray with the Word

In silence, listening to the Word of God, I let myself be guided by the Spirit, so that my heart may live in gratitude, humility, and self-awareness, renewing my life in relationship with God and others.

Some questions for reflection:

- In what do I place my hope?
- Do I let myself be attracted by the love of God to enjoy life in communion with Him, living in faith, love, and trust?
- What do I have to work harder on in order to fully live the virtue of hope?
- How can I kindle in the young people and in the environment in which I live the fire of hope and love?

5. Live the Word Together with Mary

Mary lived deeply the experience of hope since the moment she received the angel's message. She said "yes" to the will of God, following His plan. In this way, the Son of God became the center of her life, filling it and guiding it. Mary, Mother of God, is compared to the Star of the Sea - Stella Maris. In fact, Pope Benedict XVI writes, *"What person could be more than Mary a star of hope for us - she who with her 'Yes' opened to God Himself the door of our world; she who became the living Ark of the Covenant, in which God became flesh, became one of us, pitched His tent among us?"* (cf. Jn 1:14).⁷ Mary guides us to the true Hope, who is Jesus Christ, Her Son.

O Virgin of Hope, Mother and Teacher, help me to proclaim together with you, Hope to today's world. Amen.

⁶ FRANCIS, *Spes non confundit. Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025*, n.1.

⁷ BENEDICT XVI, *Spe Salvi*, n.49.