

FAITH SHARING GROUP ~ HANGING ONTO HOPE: REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR FINDING "GOOD" IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD by Sr. Melannie Svoboda, SND

Week 2 Chapter 5-9

Check in Question: What are you doing today to create a better world for the generations who will follow us? Name two or three areas.

Opening Prayer

Gracious and loving God,

As we gather today, open our hearts to share our faith, our experiences, and our hopes with one another. Help us to listen with generosity, speak with compassion, and remain mindful of the gifts and perspectives each person brings to this community.

Draw us closer to one another and closer to You. Give us the grace to build relationships rooted in mutual trust, understanding, and love. When we are uncertain, strengthen our faith. When we face challenges, deepen our trust in one another and in You.

Above all, fill us with hope. May our time together renew our spirits, strengthen our community, and inspire us to carry Your love into the world.

In whom do we hope?

1. Why did God enwrap us in love?
2. What role does creation play in your daily life? In your spiritual life?

In Whom Do We Hope?

3. James Merritt said, "The primary purpose of reading the Bible is not to know the Bible, but to know God." How has this understanding been reflected in your own life and relationship with Scripture?
4. Alice McDermott suggests that: "Being Catholic is an act of rebellion, a mad, stubborn, outrageous, nonsensical refusal to be comforted by anything less than the glorious impossibility of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting." How does this statement resonate with you? What does it suggest about the nature of Catholic hope?

Hope and Love

5. Sister Melannie speaks about how her parents' concerns and worries for their children gradually shifted toward their grandchildren. How have you experienced this shift in your own life? How has caring for the next generation shaped your

understanding of hope and love. The Oneida Indians speak of making decisions with consideration for the seventh generation.

6. Who is included in your circle of hope and love? How might your choices today affect those who come after you?

Hope's Two Daughters

7. Sister Melannie discusses the benefits of anger, suggesting that anger can be perfectly compatible with compassion. How have you experienced this to be true? Can anger sometimes be an expression of love, concern, or a desire for justice?
8. Elie Wiesel suggested that we must take sides because neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Where in your life or in the world have you been willing to take sides? Where have you found it difficult to speak up or take a stand?

Three Examples of Hope in Scripture

9. As Catholic Christians, we believe that God continually offers hope throughout Scripture. Yet we also encounter rulers like Herod, who governed through fear and tyranny. Interestingly, when the Magi entered Herod's palace, the tyranny of his court stood in stark contrast to the light of the star that had guided them.Has tyranny, fear, or the actions of others ever blocked the light of hope in your own life? How did you find your way back to the light?
10. Mary's ***yes*** to God is a defining moment in our Christian story. Her willingness to trust God changed the course of salvation history. When have you said yes to God, even when you were uncertain, afraid, or unable to see what lay ahead? What came from that yes?

Closing Prayer

For whom and what shall we pray?

Loving and faithful God,
Thank You for wrapping us in Your love and filling our lives with the beauty of creation, the wisdom of Scripture, and the promise of hope.
Help us to know You, not simply through what we learn, but through the ways we encounter You in one another and in the world around us. Give us the courage to hope beyond what seems possible, to love beyond our immediate circle, and to care for generations yet to come.
May our anger become a desire for justice, our compassion move us to action, and our faith give us the courage to speak when silence is not enough.

Like Mary, may we have the courage to say yes to You, even when the path is uncertain. When fear and darkness seem to block our view, help us look again for Your light.
May we leave this gathering renewed in hope, grounded in love, and confident in Your promise of resurrection and life everlasting.
Amen.

Upcoming Calendar

12/2 Chapters 10-14

12/9 Chapters 15-19