

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

Week 3 Chapter 10-14

Check in Question: Has guilt ever been an impetus for greater love in your life?

Opening Prayer

God of endless mercy and new beginnings, grant me the grace to recognize when I have done wrong. Help me acknowledge my mistakes with humility, take responsibility for my actions, and make amends wherever possible. When something cannot be repaired, give me the wisdom to let go, the courage to move forward, and the faith to begin again.
Open my heart to the needs of others. Help me see and respond with compassion to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and those who are imprisoned.
And when I find myself writing a difficult or painful chapter in my life, remind me that my story is not finished. With your grace, may I turn the page and begin again with renewed love, deeper faith, and enduring hope.
Amen

Reflection Questions

Chapter 10: Hope and Guilt

1. Do you believe that guilt can actually play a role in helping us become happy and well-adjusted people?
2. Sister Melannie suggests that there were a couple of sins that infuriated Jesus, namely hypocrisy and self-righteousness. Do you agree? Or would you like to add others to the list?

Chapter 11: Ways to Nourish Hope

3. Sister Melanie said that it is the job of the news media to report on negativity. Why doesn't good news sell?
4. Sister Melannie suggests that showing up for Mass is one way to hold on to hope. She finds joy in the singing, inspirational homilies, enthusiastic music, and the like. Which one of the elements of worship gives you hope?

Chapter 12: Two Hope-Filled People

5. Are you a fan of Fred Rogers? Did you enjoy him or watch him with your children? Why do you think he was so beloved?
6. Sister Melanie talks about humor being closely aligned with the virtue of hope. She spoke of Erma Bombeck as a bringer of joy. Which one of her memorable lines attracted you? (Chapter 76)

Chapter 13: Hope and Prayer

7. Sister Melannie outlines her morning prayer routine. What does your prayer routine look like?

8. Thomas Merton said, "Praying is our daily appointment with mystery." What say you about encountering God in prayer as mystery?

Chapter 14: Hope, Pain, and Sorrow

9. Washington Irving said that there's a sacredness in tears. When have you found tears to be messengers of unspeakable love?

10. Sister Melannie shared the story of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, very close to the site of the Oklahoma City bombing. The congregation elected to leave the Celtic cross, which stood atop the cathedral, somewhat broken as a result of the blast. It serves as a legacy to those who were affected by the bombing. She suggested it became a balm for the city's wounds. Have you ever found healing after tragedy? Describe the situation.

Closing Prayer

For whom and what shall we pray?

God of hope and compassion, remain with us in our pain and sorrow. Be with us in our struggles, in our tears, and in those moments when we find ourselves asking, "Why?"

Meet us in our brokenness, and help us recognize the brokenness that exists within our families, our communities, and our world. Teach us not to turn away from suffering, but to face it with courage, tenderness, and compassion.

Give us a faith that does not deny pain or minimize the suffering of others, but trusts that even in our darkest moments, your love is present. Grant us the courage to face our own mortality, knowing that our lives and all that we hold dear rest in your hands.

As we leave this time together, fill our hearts with a hope that endures through every trial and reminds us that our stories are never beyond your healing grace.

May we hold fast to the promise that all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.

Amen.

Upcoming Calendar

12/9 Chapters 15-19