

HOPE

Being real being human

Our human hungers are seeds of hope. Robert Durbach

Being human is about being hopeful. But because we are incomplete, unfinished, hopelessness is also part of the deal. To ensure that we keep this hopelessness out of our hoping, we need to live out of our deepest desires. For when we stop wanting, we stop hoping. Equally, when we stop imagining or envisioning what cannot yet be seen we become more vulnerable to despair.

Christianity is first and foremost about dealing with reality, not fantasy. It finds hope in the way things are, not the way we would like them to be.

Michael McGirr

Hope is "the willingness to stay where we are and live the situation out to the full in the belief that something hidden there will manifest itself to us."

Henri Nouwen

How difficult is it to be real - to see and to feel things as they really are? To resist evading, denying or manipulating things or circumstances simply because they are awkward, challenging or painful? Hope is learning to live responsibly, responsively in this world, now.

"Love cannot help becoming hope". Love invites us to see things as they are, to accept, embrace and wait on them to yield their secret, their invitation, their gift. The American poet Jane Hirshfield says: "I know that hope is the hardest love we carry."

Hope is about being human. It is not an absolute but a relative idea. It depends. It looks to the outside world. Hoping involves wishing and desiring. When I do not wish, I move towards despair. Hope, despite what is wrong with me, says that I am human. Hopelessness cuts me off from being human.

How "big", or inclusive is your "picture" of humanity?

How imaginative and open are you about the human condition?

The more closed and inflexible you are the more defensive you become, and the more you rely on a "vocabulary of contempt". Ironically, you also become more vulnerable to despair.

When I look around the world I see nothing but hopelessness. And yet I must, we all must try, to find a source of hope. We must believe in human beings in spite of human beings.

Elie Wiesel

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