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President's Page: There Is Hope

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President's Page



There Is Hope

The Land of Hope, the symbol of hope to a world repressed in one way or another for generations, the land of opportunity — is the United States of America. Truly there is no choice in selecting which of the nations of North America is the symbol of hope to the world at large.

I look upon America as the Land of Hope even though there are hours and days of despondency. When I see the results of *Roe v. Wade*, I also see the thousands of people who work daily in the pro-life movement. When I hear the sex education propaganda which is inundating the country, I also see the growing interest in and increasingly popular teaching of natural family planning.

I see hope for America when, with the enthusiasm of youth and the wisdom of age, the young and the old unite in prayer.

I see hope in a country where the National Conference of Catholic Bishops can consider the morality of the atom bomb, though that hope is clouded when I read nothing in the press about their proposal which hints at a call for divine help, but only a call to relinquish the available material help.

I see hope in a nation which does not have enough vocations to religious life to fill all the needs at home, but still sends forth sons and daughters to all corners of the world "to preach the gospel to all nations."

I see hope in the productivity of America, a country where the food-producing potential is so great. That hope, clouded by surpluses which are wasted when they could be used to feed the starving in so many parts of the world, is reinforced by the magnificent efforts of Catholic Relief Services and other organizations.

Above all, I see hope because as a nation we are committed to the care of a kind and loving Mother, our patroness not once, but twice. For Mary, the Immaculate Conception, is the patroness of the United States of America and Mary, the Virgin of Guadalupe, is proclaimed empress and patroness of all the Americas. And so we are doubly blessed with her protection. How can we fail with such a mother to guard and guide us?

Hope need not be a *materially* manifested virtue. It may arise from largely symbolic acts which show the supporting existence of another being. A single meal given to a near-starving person may enkindle hope when he is near despair and buoy him up enough to make an otherwise impossible effort to find food himself and thereby save his life. A good word, at the right moment, may help the alcoholic avoid the drink which would start a binge.

The hope which comes from help when it is most needed is what our Third World scholarship is all about. The recipient is a young woman, the fifth of seven children of a working-class family in the Dominican Republic. She has been active in both the pro-life and Catholic youth movements. While assisting her is not going to change the world, it is a sign that the Catholic doctors of the United States want to cooperate with the Holy Father's call to try to improve the health of the world. If you want to participate, get your local guild to hold an activity which will help economically.

I have written an open letter to President Reagan, asking him to consider structuring our Rapid Deployment Force not only as an armed military force, but also as an emergency relief force. The same soldier and truck which haul shells from port to battle can haul food from port to earthquake area. The same helicopter which evacuates combat soldiers over a tropical flood plain can fly in supplies or rescue isolated villagers from the wake of a hurricane. Of course, it would cost money, but so does every practice exercise. If you like the idea, contact your congressman and senator, and send a note to the President.

On to Mexico City in September! Have you thought about the general field of genetic engineering — where it points, how much good it might achieve, what harm can come out of it, what safeguards are necessary? Come to our annual meeting for a panel discussion on bio-genetics, genetic engineering and related topics.

Addendum

I had finished this "President's Page" when *The Chicago Catholic* printed the entire draft of the Catholic bishops' pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace." My first impulse was to delete part of what I had written. But I decided to let it stand, and instead, I offer my apologies to our pastors whose proposal does indeed call for prayer. The last three paragraphs of the precis read:

Ultimately, this letter is intended as an expression of Christian faith, affirming the confidence we have that the Risen Lord remains with us precisely in moments of crisis. It is our belief in His presence and power among us which sustains us in confronting the awesome challenge of the nuclear age. We speak from faith to provide hope for all who recognize the challenge and are working to confront it with the resources of faith and reason.

To approach the nuclear issue in faith is to recognize our absolute need for prayer. We urge and invite all to unceasing prayer for peace with justice for all people.

In the spirit of prayerful hope, we present this pastoral letter.

Your Excellencies, congratulations on a comprehensive, thoughtful document for the guidance not only of United States Catholics, but also for the people of the world. As you so forthrightly state in the proposed pastoral, there is room for varying viewpoints and debate. And certainly, in more than one way, you offer us HOPE.

— William V. Fitzsimmons, M.D.

*SAMPLE MEDICINES FOR THE MISSIONS
WOULD BE WELCOMED BY:*

*Plasencia
P.O. Box 122
Marshalls Creek, PA 18335*

*Holy Spirit Missions
Convent of the Holy Spirit
Techny, IL 60082*

*World Medical Relief, Inc.
11745 Twelfth Street
Detroit, MI 48206*