

To Be Apostles of Hope

I. PSALM 56:8&13

⁸ [O GOD,] Thou tellest my wanderings:
put Thou my tears into Thy Bottle:
are they not in Thy Book?...

¹³ For thou hast delivered my soul from death:
wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling,
that I may walk before GOD
in the light of the living? ¹

¹ 1, KJV, PSALM 56:8&13.

II. Accompanying The Grieving at The Passing of a Loved One

I was called yesterday to the bedside of LM, a 65 year old lady who was dying in the ICU. Her husband of 46 years was there, as were their son and daughter-in-law. Mrs. M's favorite grandchild, "the apple of her eye," was present close to Mrs. M. And in the midst of the tears of His people, there also was GOD, and His people's Hope in Him.

Darkness would have GOD's people loose Hope in the face of physical death and embrace Despair. But we must not succumb to this. "By Despair, man ceases to hope for his personal salvation from GOD, for help in attaining it or for the forgiveness of his sins. Despair is contrary to GOD's Goodness [and] to His Justice – for The Lord is faithful to His Promises – and to His Mercy!"²

So as the closing of LM's life drew near, as they shared Mrs. M's life story, I was asked to offer prayers for her and her family that reminded of our common Hope in GOD, His Goodness, Justice, Promises and Mercy. As an earthly life was closing, an Eternal Life was dawning. And as their tears fell in grief, we trusted together that The LORD was Present.

² 2, CCC, # 2091, p 563.

III. Tears of Joy and Sorrow in The Book of Life

King David reminds us in PSALM 56 to keep hold of our Hope in GOD - in His Perfect Goodness, Justice, Promises and Mercy. For no matter where we wander, The LORD is always watching over us. When our tears fall, The Almighty counts them one by one and places them – as it were - in His Book of Life under each of our names.

When we are invited, and with permission to join struggling brothers and sisters, it is the Minister's privilege to remind His people that GOD knows all our wanderings and struggles. He upholds us by His hand, all the days of our lives. And when He calls us over the threshold of physical death, He offers us to dwell with Him in The Land of The Living forever.

As we accompany patients, families and colleagues in the midst of struggles, even to the door of physical death, let us seek Ways of Love to remind that GOD is close at hand. Let us be Apostles of Hope, living out what The Love of GOD, resting securely upon His Perfect Goodness, Justice, Promises and Mercy.

IV. A Prayer

Let us come before The LORD together
Each according to our own Tradition.

The LORD be with you!
And also with you!

Almighty GOD, as we prepare as Your ministers
to once again accompany
our brethren and their families in Faith
for a time today through the tears of their mourning
for the passing of their loved ones,
let us be Apostles of Hope in You,
for You are Perfect in
Goodness, Justice, Promises and Mercy.
LORD, make us Your Apostles of Hope.
AMEN.

Let us go forth to love and serve The LORD!
Thanks be to GOD!

V. References

1. "King James Version [Bible]." Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
2. "Catechism of The Catholic Church." United States Catholic Conference. Doubleday of Random House, Inc. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland. 1995.