

THE HOPE WITHIN US

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Our joy cannot remain hidden

Our world today is, more than ever before, in need of order and harmony, vis-à-vis the chaos which seems to prevail in many parts of our planet, even inside our most progressive societies.

However, order and harmony are ever present and they support our world's foundations.

The creation, God's « very good » work (Gen. 1, 31) carries within itself God's seal.

No power, be it earthly or heavenly, can « cancel » the divine plan or eliminate it.

But, in the Creator's design, mankind has to play a role of paramount importance, which is to become a free collaborator with God and to « re-shape » the world **in Christ**.

Christ came on this earth in order to lead humankind—and through it the whole universe— to salvation, i.e. to a renewal, a recapitulation, a resurrection, where chaos caused by sin will have no place in it.

The Church, that is all of us who are baptized, continue Christ's work on earth.

The Spirit, who gives life to the Church, gives us the strength and the discernment we need, not only for our own benefit, but for the good of the whole world.

Our hope in Christ's promises never disappoints us and our joy cannot remain hidden; it is for this reason that the Apostle Peter writes:

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is in you. But do this with gentleness and respect and with a clear conscience”. (1 Pet. 3, 15, 16).

What a joy! We are called to be collaborators in God's creation, carrying on Christ's work, and apostles of hope in the Resurrection!

Joy and Hope

The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God.

From the very circumstance of his origin man is already invited to converse with God.

For man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to His Creator.

Still, many of our contemporaries have never recognized this intimate and vital link with God, or have explicitly rejected it. Thus atheism must be accounted among the most serious problems of this age, and is deserving of closer examination.

Gaudium et Spes, Part I, ch.I. §19, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican II, 7/12/1965



“Easy” Christianity?

The tragedy of easy Christianity is that existence has ceased to be an adventure and a constant risk in the presence of God but has become a form of morality and a doctrinal system.

This is just paganism, "cheap" Christianity, with neither cost nor pain.

It is like war games, in which armies move and there is a great deal of noise, but there is no real risk or pain—and no real victory.

The above reflections are of the Danish Philosopher, theologian and poet and founder of **Existentialism Søren Kierkegaard** (1813-1855).

Kierkegaard became increasingly convinced that his calling was in "making Christianity difficult." He was to remind people of his day that to be truly Christian, one must become aware of the cost of faith and pay the price.



Kierkegaard, confronted with the problems of everyday human existence which are not free from pain and adversity, realizes that there is no authentic Christian life without embracing the cross.

The Church should help the single individual to make a **leap of faith**, the faith that God is love and has a task for that very same single individual.

It must be noted that Kierkegaard did not have behind him the solid and rich support of the Catholic faith and tradition, as he belonged to the Danish State Church, however, he strove admirably for the light of Christ to be seen and acknowledged in the depths of every human existence.

Our very own path

Camille Pissarro (1830-1903) was a Danish-French **impressionist painter**, who brought to the fore, like none other, the beauty of the French countryside by his wonderful tableaux.

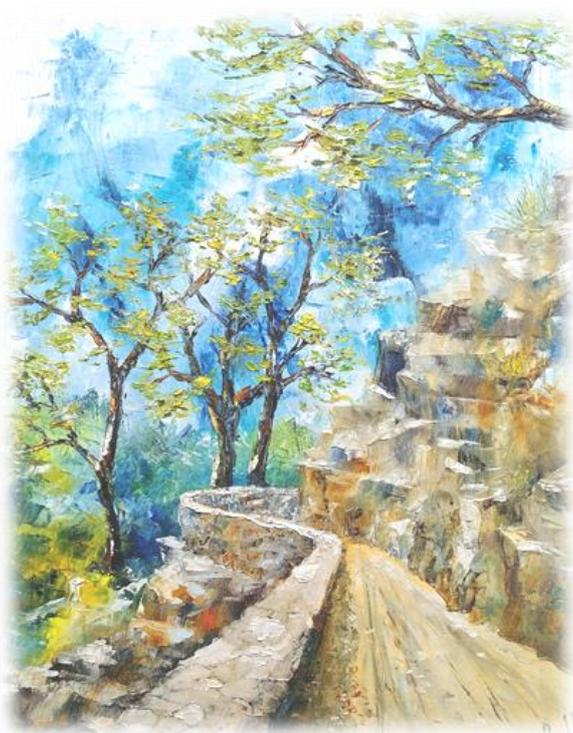
He very often portrays roads; country roads leading on to comfortable solid looking houses, or to villages, or traversing fields and valleys, or even city roads.

His work “breaths” an atmosphere of peace and serenity, beauty and security.

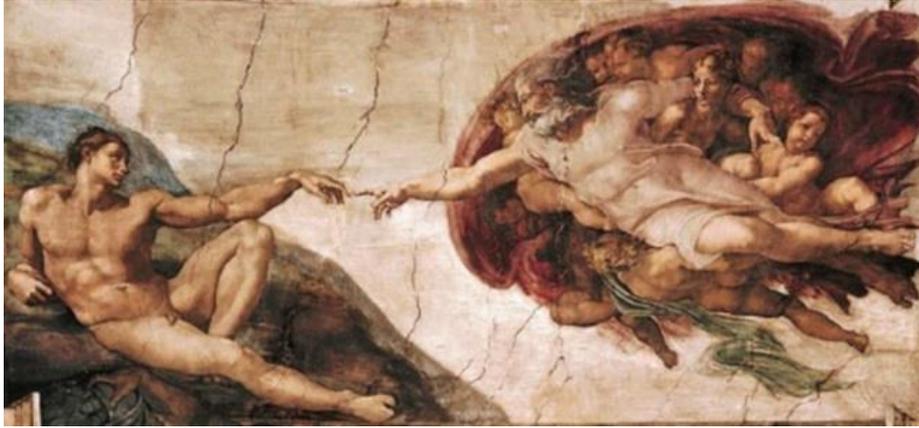
“Following” his roads we enter into a landscape full of colour and harmony between the rhythms of nature and human activity.

If for some, the human adventure needs the passion of hope for the strife to the end with all the pain and sacrifice this entails, (S. Kierkegaard), for all and everyone, this world came out of the Creator’s hands in love, and it remains a constant reminder that “all is very well”!

Let us, then, tread on our very own path with courage and confidence, with faith and hope and with the joy of the presence of God in our life, the life of His Church and the whole universe.



Did you know...



The verb **to exist** comes from the Latin **existere**, composed of two words, namely **ex (=from) + sistere (root sta-, to stand.**

The above indicates that in the collective thought and experience of our language, the “collective unconscious” as C. G. Jung might say, admits that **our existence comes from somewhere else, from a principle outside our grasp and control.**

Obvious as it may be, it is always interesting to stop and examine the origin of the words in everyday use.

Certain of their meaning, we discover a wealth of hidden information, through etymology, which most often clarifies the rich ground upon which our language grew and developed, as well as the thought processes which helped form it.

Build up in this world God's temple too

While rejecting atheism, root and branch, the Church sincerely professes that all men, believers and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike live; such an ideal cannot be realized, however, apart from sincere and prudent dialogue. Hence the Church protests against the distinction which some state authorities make between believers and unbelievers, with prejudice to the fundamental rights of the human person. The Church calls for the active liberty of believers to build up in this world God's temple too. She courteously invites atheists to examine the Gospel of Christ with an open mind.



Above all the Church knows that her message is in harmony with the most secret desires of the human heart when she champions the dignity of the human vocation, restoring hope to those who have already despaired of anything higher than their present lot. Far from diminishing man, her message brings to his development light, life and freedom. Apart from this message nothing will avail to fill up the heart of man: "Thou hast made us for Thyself," O Lord, "and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."

Apostolic Constitution Gaudium et Spes, (=Joy and Hope), Part I, ch. I. §21

As if the Sea should part

As if the Sea should part
And show a further Sea --
And that -- a further -- and the Three
But a presumption be --

Of Periods of Seas --
Unvisited of Shores --
Themselves the Verge of Seas to be --
Eternity -- is Those --

By Emily Dickinson, 1830-1886

This brief poem of the 19th century American poet Emily Dickinson, reveals the on-going spiritual search of man, who, having caught but a glimpse of the magnificence of the creation—in this instant the immensity of the sea, hankers after the Creator, i.e. the everlasting Beauty, Eternity.

Emily Dickinson came from an affluent family of Puritan origin and passed her life in relative isolation. Gardening and the writing of poems were her preferred past-times, offering her solace and peace.

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In the Catholic Tradition, the liturgy reflects the order and harmony of the redeemed created world and the place of man in it.

Moreover, in the liturgy the faithful are an integral and necessary part of it, active and responsive to God's plan of salvation in Christ, so we acclaim:

“Through Him, with Him, in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. Amen.”

Aarhus, cultural capital of Europe 2017 with Paphos



Founded in the early Viking Age, Aarhus is one of the oldest cities in Denmark. Aarhus' first church, the Holy Trinity Church, was a timber structure built around 900 A.D. The bishopric of Aarhus dates back to at least 948.

The growing influence of the Church during the Middle Ages gradually turned Aarhus, with its bishopric, into a prosperous religious centre. Many public and religious buildings were built in and around the city, like Aarhus Cathedral (see photo), in the late 12th century, by the influential bishop Peder Vognsen.

Aarhus has a population of 261,570 on 91 km². The population of Aarhus is both younger and better-educated than the national average which can be attributed to the high concentration of educational institutions.

The economy of Aarhus is predominantly knowledge and service based, strongly influenced by the University of Aarhus and the large healthcare industry. The Port of Aarhus is one of the largest industrial ports in northern Europe.