



EXPERIENCE A



Summer of Hope

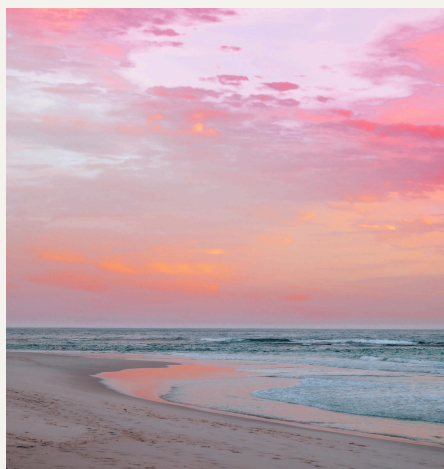
Jubilee Year of Hope 2025

After reading this article, you will find two exercises to help you build, deepen, and nurture the gift of the Spirit we call hope. Review each exercise, determine your preference, then dive in and do it!

The Journey of Hope

Pope Francis, who inaugurated this Year of Hope, also wrote a book called *On Hope*. He wrote the following on the perspective of hope as a journey:

“When we speak of hope, often it refers to what is not in humanity’s power to realize, which is invisible. In fact, what we hope for goes beyond our strength and our perception. But the birth of Christ, inaugurating redemption, speaks to us of a different hope, a dependable, visible, and understandable hope, because it is founded in God. He comes into the world and gives us the strength to walk with him: God walks with us in Jesus, and walking with him toward the fullness of life gives us the strength to dwell in the present in a new way, albeit an arduous one.”



“For a Christian, to hope means the certainty of being on a journey with Christ toward the Father who awaits us. Hope is never still, hope is always journeying, and it makes us journey. This hope, which the child of Bethlehem gives us, offers a destination, a sure, ongoing goal, salvation of humanity, blessedness to those who trust in a merciful God. Saint Paul summarizes all this with the expression ‘in this hope we were saved’ (Rom. 8:24).”

“In other words, walking in this world, with hope, we are saved. Here we can each ask ourselves the question, each one of us: Am I

walking with hope or is my interior life static, closed? Is my heart a locked drawer or a drawer open to the hope which enables me to walk not alone but with Jesus?” The Holy Spirit has given us the three great gifts of faith, hope, and love. All three are essential for the central quest of our lives, which is union with God in eternity. In this jubilee year we are invited to focus on and develop our gift of hope.

It’s not easy to always be hopeful. Life is full of disappointments, tragedies, and setbacks. One of the Church’s favorite Marian prayers (Hail, Holy Queen) refers to life as “the valley of tears.” How do we reconcile the seeming paradox of living with hope and journeying through the valley of tears?

We should deepen our understanding of hope: we should train our spirits to appreciate that hope – like its companion virtues love and faith – is something much deeper than an emotion or something we should act on only from time to time.

TAKE SOME TIME THIS SUMMER TO DIVE DEEP INTO GOD’S ABUNDANT GRACE!

EXERCISE 1: BREATHING HOPE



Ruah



"We have such need in these times that can appear dark, in which we sometimes feel disoriented by the evil and violence that surround us, by the distress of so many of our brothers and sisters. We need hope. We feel disoriented and even rather discouraged because we are powerless, and it seems this darkness will never end. We must not let hope abandon us, because God, with his love, walks with us."

--On Hope, by Pope Francis

Ruah

The ancient Hebrew word for "breath," ruah, also meant "spirit". It's from the ancient Hebrews that we get the metaphor of God breathing life into us, but they believed it literally – they believed that are animated by the spirit that God physically breathes into us, just as happens in the Book of Genesis, when God breathed into the clay form of a human, and Adam came to life. God sustains our life moment to moment, from one breath to the next. Awareness of our own breathing, and its relation to the concept of ruah, or spirit, is a powerful reminder of God's presence and constant care. Such awareness can renew our hope in God.



Practice this daily

Practice this exercise a few minutes every day for a week.

First, find a quiet place you can relax and focus – a comfortable room indoors or an outdoor location where you can find quiet and calm. Sit up straight, and plant your feet firmly on the ground. Feel the ground beneath your feet. Imagine yourself rooted to the ground – you are stable and grounded.

Starting from your head and going down to your feet, slowly relax, slowly, from head to toe. Start breathing slowly and deeply, in through your nose, then out through your mouth. Imagine that you are breathing in ruah, God's spirit, and breathing out all impurities, all doubts about God, all anxieties.

Meditations

Next, add these meditations:

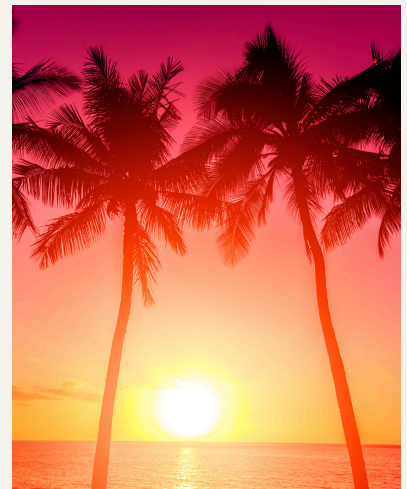
Breathe in love and compassion for yourself and others; breathe out anxieties you have about your loved ones.

Breathe in Jesus' promise that his peace will be with you; breathe out concerns you have about your health and loved ones' health.

Breathe in hope in God's providence and loving care; breathe out all worry you have about finances.

Breathe in God's assurance that these times will pass, breathe out everything causing you fear or anxiety right now.

(Adapted from Reflections – Breathe Hope, by Rebecca Ruiz, at IgnatianSpirituality.com)



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EXERCISE 2: LIVING IN HOPE



Hope never disappoints



"The foundation of hope is what we can be most faithful and certain of – the love that God himself has for each of us." "Christian hope is the expectation of something that has already been fulfilled and will certainly be fulfilled for each one of us." "...hope never disappoints. Optimism disappoints, but hope does not."

-- from On Hope, by Pope Francis



More than a feeling

Christian hope is related to faith, in that it is rooted in trust that God is good and that He cares. Christian hope is an active hope; it includes prayer, cooperation with God's grace, and gratitude. Hope should be more than just a wish or a feeling, or it will be too much like simple optimism. Optimism is the unfounded belief that good things will happen. At best, optimism is blind hope – without any reason given and without any connection to faith. Worse, optimism may be trusting to chance – relying on luck instead of trusting in God. Worst of all, optimism can be self-delusion – believing that things will somehow magically work out whatever we do or fail to do.

Journal

Carry a notepad or journal with you for a week. Pay attention to each time you find yourself expressing hope or optimism, whether to yourself or out loud. You might use phrases like "I hope that..." or "I wish..." or "If things go right..." – all of these indicate an expression of hope or optimism. When you have a moment, take some time to journal on the following:

1. **What** is it you are hoping for? Try to put it into words.
2. **Why** do you want what you are hoping for? Is it for yourself or for others? Will having this thing bring you closer to God?

3. Now that you are thinking about it, **how important** is this to you? Do you want to rephrase what you wrote for Item 1?

4. Come up with a prayer to express this hope to God. **Express your trust** that God wants what is best for you – or, if you are a little bit lacking in trust or confidence, then ask God to increase your faith and wisdom. Also, remember to include the qualifier that Jesus himself prayed – *not my will be done, Father, but Yours*.

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1 PETER 1:3-21



Be holy



Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time.

In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Concerning this salvation, prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and investigated it, investigating the time and circumstances that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the glories to follow them.

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you with regard to the things that have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels longed to look.

Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, live soberly and set your hopes completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Like obedient children, do not act in compliance with the desires of your former ignorance but, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, "Be holy because I am holy."

Now if you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one's works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb.

He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

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