



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE** Wednesday, 31 May

2017 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

In the imminence of the [Solemnity of Pentecost](#) we cannot but speak of the relationship there is between Christian hope and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the wind that propels us forward, which supports us on our journey, makes us feel as pilgrims and sojourners, and does not allow us to sit back and become a “sedentary” people.

The Letter to the Hebrews compares hope to an anchor (cf. 6:18-19); and we can add to this image that of a sail. If the anchor is what gives the boat its stability and keeps it “anchored” amid the undulations of the sea, the sail is instead what makes it move and advance on the waters. Hope is truly like a sail; it gathers the wind of the Holy Spirit and transforms it into a driving force that propels the boat, as the case may be, out to sea or to the shore.

The Apostle Paul concludes his Letter to the Romans with this hope: Pay attention; listen carefully. What a beautiful wish: “*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope*” (15:13). Let us reflect a while on the meaning of this beautiful message.

The expression “God of hope” does not mean only that God is the object of our hope, that is, he whom we hope to reach one day in eternal life; it also means that God is the One who already makes us hope, rather, makes us “rejoice in hope” (Rom 12:12): joyful now to hope, and not only hoping to rejoice. It is the joy of hoping and not of hoping to have joy, already today. A popular adage says: “as long as there is life, there is hope”; and the opposite is also true: as long as there is hope, there is life. Mankind needs hope in order to live and needs the Holy Spirit in order to hope.

Saint Paul — we have heard — attributes to the Holy Spirit the capacity to make us actually “*abound in hope*”. To abound in hope means to never be discouraged; it means to hope “against all hope” (cf. Rom 4:18), that is, to hope even when there is no human reason to hope, as it was

for Abraham when God asked him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, and as it was, even more so, for the Virgin Mary at the foot of Jesus' Cross.

The Holy Spirit makes this invincible hope possible, giving us the interior witness that we are children of God and his heirs (cf. Rom 8:16). How could the One who gave us his Only Son not give us all things along with him? (cf. Rom 8:32). "Hope" — brothers and sisters — "does not disappoint us. Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). Therefore, it does not disappoint us because the Holy Spirit is within us urging us to move forward, always! This is why hope does not disappoint us.

There is more: the Holy Spirit does not only enable us to hope, but also to be *sowers of hope*, to be, we too — like him and thanks to him — "*paracletes*", that is, comforters and protectors of our brethren, sowers of hope. A Christian might sow bitterness, might sow doubt, and this is not Christian, and whoever does this is not a good Christian. Sow hope: sow the oil of hope, sow the perfume of hope and not the vinegar of bitterness and of hopelessness. Blessed Cardinal Newman, in an address, said to the faithful: "Taught by our own pain, our own sorrow, nay, by our own sin, we shall have hearts and minds exercised for every service of love towards those who need it. We shall in our measure be comforters after the image of the Almighty Paraclete, — that is of the Holy Spirit — and that in all senses of the word, — advocates, assistants, soothing aids. Our words and advice, our very manner, voice, and look, will be gentle and tranquillizing" (*Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v, London 1870, p. 309). It is above all the poor, the excluded, the unloved who need someone who becomes a "paraclete" for them, that is, comforter and protector, as the Holy Spirit does for each of us, who are here in the Square, comforter and protector. We must do the same for the most needy, for the rejected, for those who are in most need, those who suffer the most. Protectors and comforters!

The Holy Spirit fosters hope not only in the heart of mankind, but also *in the whole of creation*. The Apostle Paul says — this sounds somewhat curious, but it is true — that creation, too, "waits with eager longing" to be set free, and it "groans and suffers" as in the travail of childbirth (cf. Rom 8:20-22). "The energy capable of moving the world is not an anonymous and blind force but the action of the 'Spirit of God ... moving over the face of the waters' (Gen 1:2) at the beginning of the Creation" ([*Benedict XVI, Homily, 31 May 2009*](#)). This too urges us to respect creation: one cannot deface a painting without offending the artist who created it.

Brothers and Sisters, may the forthcoming Feast of Pentecost — which is the birthday of the Church — find us concordant in prayer, with Mary, Jesus' Mother and our own. And may the gift of the Holy Spirit make us abound in hope. I will tell you something more: may he enable us to lavish hope on all those who are neediest, the marginalized and all those in need. Thank You.

Special greetings:

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly the groups from England, Belgium, Norway, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Tahiti, Uganda, Canada and the United States of America. I also greet the pilgrims who have come to take part in the Vigil of Pentecost on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Upon all of you and your families I invoke a rich outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God bless you all!

I address a warm welcome to the Italian-speaking pilgrims. I greet the parish groups and associations, in particular the volunteer donors of the State Police of Campania and the aic-cos of Molfetta, as well as the members of General Motors. May the visit to the Eternal City prepare each one to live the Solemnity of Pentecost intensely, and may the gift of the Comforter Spirit support and foster the virtue of hope.

I offer a special thought to *young people*, to *the sick* and to *newlyweds*. Dear *young people*, may you place the search for God and his love above all things; dear *sick people*, may the Paraclete be of

help and comfort to you in the moments of greatest need; and you, dear *newlyweds*, with the grace of the Holy Spirit, may you make your union deeper and more steadfast each day.