

Homily: Aug. 23, 2022

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Chapters usually call us to reflect seriously upon our Crosier Religious life. The scripture readings today support such reflection. We gather to allow God's Word to build a stronger relationship with him and thereby cleanse us of certain human tendencies, which compromise our discipleship in Jesus. We come to God in need of his compassion.

We just heard Paul call upon his people to base their lives on true hope, not on a false hope fueled by rumors and fake news that the Lord's day was right around the corner. He reminded his contemporary Christians, and us today, that we are called "to possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Today, in our Give-Us-This-Day reflection book, St. Oscar Romero uses Paul's words and reminds us that power and money are not our sources of hope and glory. True hope, he says, lies in the paschal mystery of the murderously crucified Jesus, transformed into an eternal king, as reflected in the ongoing proclamation of justice, love, hope, and peace. We Crosiers and Crosier Associates often remind ourselves that God calling us to touch suffering with hope.

We are living in very challenging and painful times, which call us to be people of hope. Our society needs persons who hope, in the midst of multiple discouraging elements. Our present culture still tries to trick us into believing that money and material give us real joy. Our society is suffering from a sharp political divide. We Christians also feel challenged by an ongoing decrease in formal and intentional affiliation with Christianity.

During these chapter conversations, we Crosiers are painfully aware of how much our future challenges us. The vocation crisis continues in the western world but is also increasing in the eastern portions of our Order. Behind these difficulties arises an ever louder call for us to be people of hope, based on a deep, as well as authentic, vibrant, and enthusiastic Christian faith.

Staying in touch with and growing that hope happens when we seek for and open ourselves to an increasingly deeper relationship with our God of life-giving love. The desire and effort to go deeper in our relationship with divine love is the essential dynamic of mysticism, which we are exploring and grappling with during these chapter days.

When we do not focus on our hope in the crucified and risen Christ nor on the deepening of our relationship with God, we will become prone to prioritizing externals, dilly-details, and good appearance. Finally, we may end up turning ourselves into

hypocrites. This temptation is especially possible for us religious, as intimated by Jesus' criticism of religious leaders of his time.

We religious can easily get into appearing great. Our Crosier habits are real eye-catchers. Our communal appearance, as a rich mixture of cultures and colors, is striking. However, the most important is the paschal mystery we proclaim and the presence and depth of our fraternal love for one another as our primary motivation and goal.

For us human beings to stay in touch with such essentials is a mystical challenge. The good news is, as Paul reminded us, that God and Jesus have given us "encouragement and good hope through his grace."