

REFLECTIONS ON THE VIRTUES OF MOTHER FRANCES STREITEL

HOPE





DEFINITION

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of Heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity. (CCC 1817-1818)

The Servant of God exercised hope throughout her life. During her difficult life, Mother Frances faced every challenge with the hope that through God's help everything would be ironed out, and the truth would surface. She constantly placed her hope in Providence to help her see that God's Will would guide each project. The goal which guided her actions throughout her life was to show the glory of God. This very hope gave her strength to face everything for the glory of God.



TESTIMONIALS ... of the past ...

I hope that God will bear my petitions because in spite of being very weak in the good I have nevertheless a strong desire to become good and to lead others to the good. And whoever asks receives ... whoever asks trustingly receives even more surely.

(M. Frances of the Cross)



RESOURCES

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Ps. 16 Prov. 10:28 Rom. 12:12 Rom. 15:13

OUR WAY OF LIFE: Articles #43, 53, 84

WRITINGS OF MOTHER FRANCES

Letter to Fr. J. F. Jordan: Letter 2 (2), February 18, 1883, #2
 Letter 16 (7), March 9, 1883, #3
 Letter 69 (46), December 7, 1883, #5



REFLECTION

COMMUNITY QUESTION:

As a region/delegation/community do we live our lives with a firm hope and belief that God is leading us to minister to the needs of others in a manner appropriate for us, or are we always seeking to do what is beyond us?

PERSONAL QUESTION:

When difficulties come my way, whether physical, spiritual, emotional, am I able to exemplify patience while placing my hope in God that this will lead to a greater good for me?



TESTIMONIALS ... of today ...

It is the maxims - her charism - that significantly influenced my life. She wrote: “**Prayer and work** must go hand in hand ... to remedy the spiritual and social misery of mankind” (L 39). Three times she wrote about the **fundamental evils** of her time:

(1) She hinted at **Materialism**, writing: “where in spite of *enlightenment*, *darkness* reigns in the soul” (L 15). The materialists propagated the theory that physical matter is the only reality and denied the existence of God. (2) Regarding **Liberalism**: “One desires sinful liberty ... saying, ‘I will not serve You’, drags all civil order with him ... to eternal perdition” (L 24). (3) Regarding **Sensuality/Sensualism**, nowadays Sexuality: “... the archenemy of pride, sensuality, and their attendants” (L 15).

In our times these evils have but grown: atheism, Satanism, divorces, abortions, trans-genderism, every kind of sin against the 6th Commandment, human trafficking, drugs, millionaires/billionaires vs. poverty.

The **counteraction** of M.F. was to be **prayer, adoration** (cf. L 29, 33, 39, 75), **humility** (cf. L 17, 24, 54), **silence** (cf. Index: Silence), **poverty** (cf. Index: Poverty), **obedience** (cf. L 4, 17, 28, 54). Her desire was that “**God** be glorified, the **Church** be comforted, and the **world** ... will be saved of its basic evils” (L 41) and that the Sisters “shall be like a **lighthouse**, whose rays penetrate far into the surf of human misery, so that many may find the way back to the haven of salvation” (L 76).

Sr. Therese Marie (USA)



Through my aunt Sr. M. Godulina Galster I got to know the SSM order better. I came to know and love Mother Frances Streitel as a woman of faith.

She combined prayer and work in her daily life so well that neither was neglected. Through her firm faith, strong hope and great love, she always tried to recognize God's will in everything.

It was certainly not easy for her, but in spite of many obstacles and difficulties, she found a trusting devotion and a deep connection with God, which strengthened and consolidated her more and more.



Mother Frances suffered in silence, but she was never discouraged. That is why I have taken Mother Frances especially close to my heart and pray to her every day...

Don't we often feel the same way? Mother Frances is our great role model and I personally admire her. She visibly helps me to carry on through her strong, deep faith when things are difficult.

Let us hold on to God through prayer and we will be carried by His merciful love.

Mother Frances set an example for us and we must trust our lives into God's hands.

Sr. Monika (Germany)



From early childhood, Mother Frances was an intelligent child. "Nature had endowed her with a strong will and willful temper..." (Walk in Love, p.5). At an early age she learnt self-control, self-discipline, orderliness and punctuality.

For me, God was preparing her to be an instrument of his love, kindness and to participate in His mission. Mother Frances' gifts and virtues give me so much hope as I try to walk in the footsteps of Christ. She faced so many challenges during her journey as a religious and yet she was able to find meaning in the experiences. She was able to use the gifts and talents from God and practice her virtues of self-discipline and self-control during those challenging times.

God has a purpose for each of us and when we use these virtues during our challenges, we can find that purpose. God gives each of us virtues to overcome the challenges we face in life. These virtues bring me hope and admiration which are very important as I live in community with sisters of different family and cultural backgrounds, different gifts and talents and different ideas and personality.

As I encounter people in our ministry with different needs and challenges, I ask Mother Frances to pray and intercede for me. I have come to understand and appreciate her as a woman of deep faith, hope. I will take her as my role model of one who has a strong temper but can be very docile and open to the Holy Spirit working in her.

Sr. Annie (Caribbean)

“To strive for perfect union with the most holy will of God the Father in ‘Love and Suffering’” (Spiritual Notes, 1897-1899).

Love and pain, like Mary, all the saints, all men and women throughout time, lead to the Mystery, to God, and always go together, like two sides of the same coin. I am deeply impressed by Mother Frances’ firm decision to unite herself to God and to respond to His will through love and pain, with all her humanity, especially in the most difficult moments of her life. In times of trial—such as in Würzburg when she was the Superior at Maria Stern, or after the deposition, or in other decisive moments of her life—Mother Frances would live both love and pain with dignity and stature, opening her heart to God with total willingness.



In everything that is part of life, in its joys and sorrows, it is God who guides and brings to fulfillment—it is He who acts and transforms, who sublimates. And with complete trust in Him, Mother Frances allows Him to act in her life, responding to the mystery of life, accepting, giving and receiving in love and pain, bearing the fruits of a fuller life.

Sr. Rita (Italy)



What I truly admire about Mother Frances is that, no matter how difficult a situation in her life was, she was solely focused on fulfilling God’s will and, full of courage and boundless trust in God, she completely devoted herself to the guidance of God.

This trust of Mother Frances, that God does everything right, sustains me and helps me in my life.

I often don’t understand God’s guidance, but I firmly believe:
God does not make mistakes.

Sr. Meinrada (Germany)