



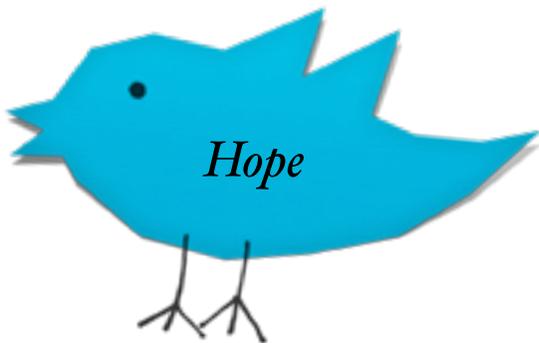
Cycle A

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Lectionary # 524

Reading I: Malachi 3: 1-4

The prophet Malachi is warning both the priests and the people of the disrespect they are showing God by bringing second-best offerings for the Lord. Malachi clearly indicates that God would prefer no offerings at all rather than half-hearted sacrifices. Malachi makes it clear that God's messenger is coming and will accuse them of cheating God by skimping on their offerings, which are designated to support the poor. In the later part of the chapter and book, Malachi speaks of **hope**, the possibility of change, and conversion of heart. The **hope** spoken of throughout the Scriptures is that God is always calling us to right our relationship with Him.



Reading 2: Hebrews 2: 14-18

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of Jesus as the one who came to sacrifice himself for the sins of the world. In his sacrifice, he offers humanity salvation, which is in essence, hope. The writer speaks of the fact that Jesus entered into human existence to know first hand what it was to be human and specifically in this passage, what it was to be tested in suffering. Jesus, because he was like us in all things but sin, gives us **hope** in the midst of the trials and difficulties posed to us in this life.

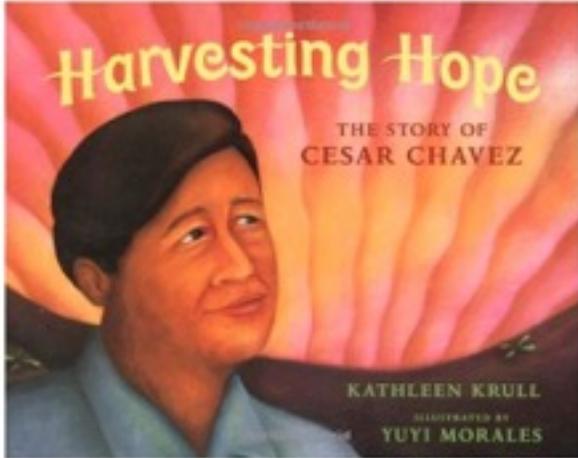


Gospel: Luke 2 : 22 - 40

This passage speaks to the fact that Jesus was born into a family that is observant of the law. Mary and Joseph are careful to have this child, the firstborn, circumcised and presented to the Lord as prescribed by the Law. As Jesus' parents prepare to make their offering to the Lord for their child, they encounter the holy man Simeon, who was on his way to the Temple. Simeon takes the child into his arms and realizes that this is the Christ of God. On Simeon's lips are the words of the prayer that is used each night by those who pray the Night Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. The prayer is known as the Nunc Dimitis, *Now Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all peoples; a light for the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.* Clearly the words of the prayer are filled with **hope**.



children's
story



Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez

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character
education
activity

Hope is one of the three theological virtues, the others being faith and love. Hope is trusting that God will see to our greatest good no matter the circumstances.

Harvesting Hope: the Story of Cesar Chavez

Cesar Chavez is known as one of America's greatest civil rights leaders. He became a beacon of **hope** for migrant farm workers. The students will meet Chavez at his grandparent's home in Arizona where he lived happily with his large extended family. All of a sudden Chavez' childhood is cut short when the family has to move to seek work in California. After laboring for years in the fields he becomes increasingly disturbed by the poor living conditions imposed upon them. Chavez becomes a point person for bringing about a change in the working and living conditions for the migrant farmers. He ultimately allows them to see **hope** for change. The change would not only involve the physical conditions of the laborers but also a change of heart and appreciation for others made in the image and likeness of God.

Activity

Step One: Encourage the students to discuss how **hope** drives change. What were the things that Cesar Chavez **hoped** for that made him find a way to talk people into joining his fight for justice? How did **hope** help Cesar to overcome his shyness and become a leader? How does Cesar Chavez and other activists like him instill hope in others?

Step Two: Have the students trace one of their hands on a piece of light colored construction paper and write on it one **hope** that they will try to pursue in their lifetime. Have the students construction paper hands form a border around the doorway or placed in a prominent place where they can see their hopes and the hopes of others in the class.

The person of Jesus brought hope into the world. To be a follower of Jesus we too are called to bring hope to others.



case study

Look.
Feel.
Know.
Act.

What could you do today?

Recall the **hope** that you wrote on your construction paper hand and use it to remind yourself of what your hope is and that any hope is a collaborative effort between you and God. Formulate a prayer based on your hope. Make several copies of the prayer and place one by your bedside and maybe even tape one to the mirror in your bathroom as a reminder of what your hope is and that this hope is a partnership between you and God. There was a saint by the name of Augustine who was known to say; *work as if everything depended upon you and pray as if everything depended upon God!* With these words we can see that you and God will bring about good things just as Mr. Cesar Chavez and God brought about something good.

Look Feel Know Act

Hope is one of the three theological virtues along with faith and love. These three virtues are gifts from God. However, every gift must be cared for and nurtured. Think of how you can nurture these gifts within yourself, among your family members, classmates and others. What are some of the ways you can help your family and friends and even strangers see or experience **hope**? In Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians he encourages the people to *speak only the words that people need to hear, things that will really be helpful to them.* Have you said some unhelpful things to people in the past? Can you go back to those people and ask for forgiveness?

Each of the theological virtues can help us live a really good life. We are called by God to live out the gift of faith, **hope**, and love in all instances and certainly we will always need and have God's help in doing this. Think of some of the ways that you can be a person of faith and love just as you thought of ways of bringing hope to others. Remember that once you think of these things it is important to turn the thoughts into actions.

In *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* we see a movement that comes about because of a **hope** that was inspired by God and worked through Cesar Chavez and many others who assisted him in making a change for the migrant farm workers. **Hope** is very much a catalyst, that is something that gets a process or a change moving and also sustains that process or change. **Hope** is a gift given to each of us by God, but it is up to us to do something with the gift.

Pray that you will always speak and do things that will really help people as Saint Paul encouraged the Ephesians. Ask God to make your virtue of hope shine in all ways each and every day.



**closing
tool**



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