

# Mercy MOMENTS



## Missionaries of Hope

At Pope Francis' General audience earlier this month he invited Christians to be **Missionaries of Hope.**

As October is traditionally dedicated to reflect on participation in the Church's mission Pope Francis asked Christians to model themselves on St Francis since he was a "missionary of joyful hope."

He continued, "Jesus asks us to be witnesses of that same hope, confident in the transforming power of his Spirit at work in our hearts and in our world. Joy is the sure sign of true Christian hope, for we know that evil will not have the upper hand, and that God's love, revealed on the cross, will ultimately triumph."

He said the gift of hope, though costly, can be seen in the living example of the persecuted and the martyred. It is their witness we must use to inspire us to continue to hope in Christ's promises and continue to live as "missionaries of hope".

But what is hope? Joan Chittister OSB explores the concept of hope in the paradox of struggle.

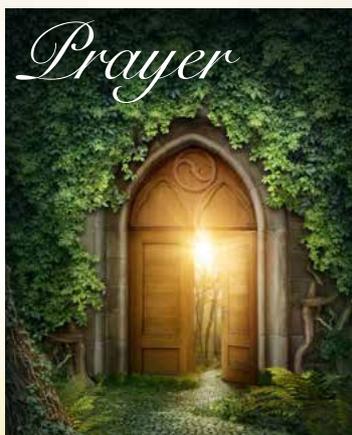
"I argue that hope is not what it defends us from – the struggle. Hope is the result of struggle. I learned to hope

because of all the struggles I'd been through and have survived ... And it is the dimensions of this struggle that have tested my ability to save myself, not to give in to the laws, not to hide from the laws, not to make everybody else my crutch now, it's this peace that I walk through a step at a time. It won't happen overnight, it's a life-changing process.

"Struggle's not an event, struggle is a dimension of life that you take on and every time that you're confronted with the negative element of struggle, you're not worth anything anymore, you'll never make your way out of this, you deserve this. It is coming through them all, one at a time, where I can look back and say, God was with me, grace was with me, the call was with me, I survived it, and I'll survive the next thing too. On that I hope."

The Pope concluded his general audience with these words, "As missionaries of hope, may we rejoice in God's saving power, never lose heart, and help others to look to the future with confidence."

References: <http://www.romereports.com/en/2017/10/04/general-audience-pope-invites-christians-to-be-missionaries-of-hope/>;  
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/spiritofthings/struggle-and-hope-sister-joan-chittister/3246834#transcript>



*O Lord, we call upon You in our time of struggle, that You give us the strength and will to bear our burdens, until we can again feel the warmth and love of Your compassion. Be mindful of us and have mercy on us while we struggle to comprehend life's hardships. We ask you for joy and hope to strengthen and renew our hearts and spirits.*

### REFLECTION

Overcoming adversity is an enormous accomplishment, it is energising and vital to living joyfully. As we travel through life, those who have overcome struggles are the kind of companions you want by your side. Think about those around you – family, friends or colleagues.

- > How do we walk with them in times of adversity and struggle?
- > Are we witnesses of hope?
- > Do we compassionately restore their confidence through love and support?