

SOWING HOPE FOR THE COMMON GOOD: 'Wear Hope Like a Skin'¹

Sister Teresa R. Dagdag, MM, PhD

General Assembly of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations

Fatima, Portugal

October 23, 2014

I. INTRODUCTION

I am honored to be in the presence of hundreds of women leaders who represent Catholic women's organizations worldwide and have come together as 'Sowers of Hope'. WUCWO is a macrocosm of the Catholic Women's League that I knew when I was growing up. CWL was one of the mandated organizations of women which collaborated with other organizations in the parish where I grew up in the Philippines. My mother, godmother, friends and teachers were CWL members so memories connect you to me through them. Almost 50 years after I left this parish to join the Maryknoll Sisters, I hope that this exchange will bear fruit for years to come.

A. HOPE

I ask, "why sow hope?" Your Board's decision to focus on each of you as 'sowers of hope' is the working of the Holy Spirit. My part on this panel is to share my reflections on how you can help one another to "sow hope for the common good."

Our daily experience of hope. We use 'hope' as a verb when we **expect** something to happen and we use 'hope' as a noun to express a feeling of **trust**. Hope has the power to pull us through difficult times. Hope is often described with 'light' metaphors² — a ray, a beam, a glimmer, the break in the clouds; the light at the end of the dark tunnel. Hope comes with an element of surprise because it is the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Certainly you can share of your own experiences when hope pulled you through. In my experience, it is easy enough to say that I hope in God's promise when I am happy and everything seems to be going my way, when I have enough money to spend and more to give away, but when I suffer or am in pain, my hope is often tested. Actually, suffering produces hope.³

Consider the time farther back when the Israelites were in exile in Babylon before the time of Jesus in 587 BCE when they were a displaced people away from their land seemingly without God and feeling abandoned. It was then when they remembered God's love for them, accompanying them through their journey in the desert to the Promised Land. The community decided to write everything that reminded them of God's love and produced the Torah, the five books. Their memory of God-with-them gave them hope. We know that Christian 'hope' does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us' (Romans 5:5).

Pope Francis on hope. For us Christians, 'hope' is based on the promise from God. Pope Francis says, 'Christian hope ... is our joyful expectation of the Lord's coming and the fulfillment of his saving plan for the human family. In every generation the Church holds high the lamp of this hope before the world. Today let us ask whether our lamps are alight with the oil of faith, and to what extent we live as credible and joy-filled witnesses to our hope in God's promises.'⁴ God's promise is that God will always

be there with us, to bless us in our sadness, disappointments, sickness, or doubt. Our faith tells us from experience that God will lift us up from darkness.

Good Friday, Resurrection, and Pentecost. On Good Friday when Jesus was made to suffer, most of the disciples disappeared; Peter denied him three times. Jesus reminded us always ‘to love one another as I have loved you’ (Jn 13:34). It is in the Eucharist that we remember how Jesus loved us to his death and directed us to “do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19). After his resurrection, Mary recognized him; she ran to tell the disciples! The two disciples going to Emmaus were grieving when they recognized him in the breaking of the bread. On Pentecost, the disciples of Jesus were huddled together after Jesus’ ascension feeling abandoned. Suddenly, there came a strong wind and tongues of fire rested on their heads. They became alive and energetic and told everyone about the deeds of Jesus! Like them, we remember the love of Jesus and we know that Christian ‘hope’ does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us’ (Romans 5:5). At Pentecost, the disciples became fearless and had courage to share what Jesus meant to them. That very day, three thousand were baptized! The Spirit filled their hearts with hope and they became fruitful in their preaching!

B. COMMON GOOD

In a civic society, the role to ensure the ‘common good’ is the responsibility of governments which try to balance different interests so that those who are vulnerable receive attention for their needs. ‘Common good’ refers to the general welfare of a population, rich and poor. The term ‘common good’ refers to the widest application of good in community particularly including those on the margins of society, the vulnerable and the needy. It is important for us to direct our hope to the ‘common good’.

The concepts of *the common good*, *solidarity with others*, and *concern for the poor* are important.⁵ To work for the common good is a moral issue and one distinct approach goes back to St. Thomas Aquinas and before him, to Aristotle. The focus is on what is *good* and the central feature in this approach is *natural law*, which is more basic than, and prior to, any human laws. This approach is also in the Catholic Social Teachings of the Church.

Let the more fortunate renounce rights. In *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), Pope Francis emphasizes the ‘common good’⁶ when he calls for the inclusion of the poor in society. (EG, 186) Common good is a ‘matter of hearing the cry of entire peoples, the poorest peoples of the earth (EG, 190) and it must be reiterated that ‘the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others’ (EG, 190:155).’

Common Good means also care for fragile Earth. Pope Francis always links care for fragile people to care for fragile Earth; it includes the wellbeing of all the members of the Earth community, the good of the other species besides humans. For him, “Christian conversion demands reviewing especially those aspects of life ‘related to the social order and the pursuit of the common good.’” (EG, 182:149).

Common Good leans towards the excluded poor. Common good is foundational to Jesus’ mission: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are

oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Lk 4:18). ‘Common good’ refers to everyone including those who are blind, lame, in prison, persecuted, and those on the margins.

This presentation consists of three parts:

- 1) to introduce the inductive method that can be used to generate HOPE for the COMMON GOOD;
- 2) to walk through the SEE-JUDGE-ACT process to help to generate local plans and action;
- 3) to offer some recommendations which would help to sustain HOPE for the future.

II. INDUCTIVE METHOD

There are mainly two ways in science that can be used to generate knowledge. One is called *deductive* and the other is *inductive* method. Deductive method goes from general to particular and the inductive starts from the particular and ends with the general. Either of these two methods is used in theology. Inductive method starts with one’s experience of reality— a lived experience of hope that have pulled her through. Others in the group share similar experiences then they can gather patterns in these experiences which lead to their knowledge of God’s presence in their lives. I am grateful for the insight of Fr. Gerard Whelan, SJ⁷ where he discussed inductive method used at the Episcopal Conferences in Latin America, the last of which was the *Aparecida* Conference (2006). Pope Francis used many of *Aparecida*’s statements in his references for *Evangelii Gaudium*. The inductive method of theology has been used by Pope Francis extensively. It has been observed recently, too, that the Synod on Family used the inductive method.⁸

Inductive method is a three-phase process which seeks to understand the cultural, religious, socio-economic reality of people by starting with one’s own experiences; to discern how God is present in these realities; and to make plans that would continue to ensure God’s presence among us. It was used by the Young Christian Workers (YCW) in Belgium in the 1900s and was also the method used by the YCW in Hong Kong. As a process of reflection, it uses the framework of SEE, JUDGE, and ACT sequence.

A. SEE: what does it mean to ‘see’?

To ‘see’ means to be aware of my lived experiences; it means to connect mindfully with events that affect our lives as Christians. These events could contribute or hamper our growth as followers of Christ. The Church *has the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. (Gaudium et Spes, 4)*⁹ the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the World (1965). As people of God, we are invited to be in solidarity with the people: *“The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.”* (GS, 1) This passage urges us to identify with feelings of joy or grief of the people in the world. ‘People’ includes our own families, communities/groups, our countries, everyone in this world. It would be difficult to do this unless we are in touch with them and are familiar with their lives many of whom may be poor or afflicted. We cannot identify with them if we do not relate to them. We cannot do this if, as evangelizers, we do not *‘take on the smell of the sheep’ (Evangelii Gaudium, 24)*.

When I worked with the Commission for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation – USG-UISG in Rome,

I encountered diverse faces of injustice in many issues in the world: the refugees and migrants, the women, men and children who are trafficked for sex, organs, drugs, and labor. We have become aware of the uneven distribution of wealth among the rich and the poor, among those who exploit the mines and those who go inside tunnels to operate them. Various mines extract precious metals that we need for our mobile phones; the gold and silver that are so ever present in our tabernacles and jewelry. We have become aware of the need for better food systems that would address the problem of hunger in the world affecting almost 1 billion people in the world. These are some of the issues that affect the wellbeing of people in the world today; addressing them means working for the common good. Similarly, 50 years later, we are called to read the 'signs of the times' so that we can reflect on them in the light of our faith and respond to them as followers of Christ. Pope Francis describes many 'signs' in our world today. He calls these times a 'turning point in its history' where advances are being made in health care, education, and communications. Regrettably, at the same time, 'majority of our contemporaries are barely living from day to day, with dire consequences. A number of diseases are spreading'; joy in living frequently fades, there is lack of respect for others; violence is on the rise and inequality is increasingly evident. It is a struggle to live with precious little dignity... we are in an age of knowledge and information which has led to new and often anonymous kinds of power. (EG, 52)

B. JUDGE: what does it mean to judge?

The second step in the inductive process is to 'judge'. To judge means to put our experience side by side with the values of the Gospels and of the *Magisterium* (teaching authority of the Church). We assess if there are resonances, agreements or contradictions between our lived reality and the Church's teachings. When we consider the focus on "Money, Virtue, and Love", while I agree entirely on the use of money "tempered by virtue and especially by love", in fact, the way money is mainly used at present by those who have lots of it is, unfortunately, are not at all tempered in this way. The question to ask here is: How are **we** WUCWO members different from these who use money to control? What does the Church have to say to this reality? How would the Church address un-tempered experiences in relation to money, finances, or hunger? To judge also means to come up with the analysis of the problem at hand to discover its root causes.

CHURCH SOURCES: The Gospels and *Evangelii Gaudium (2013)* help us to judge whether Christian values are reflected in our lived reality.

The Gospels : Let us examine the following Gospel quotations to show two attitudes towards money:

1) **Talent Investing:** This story is about the three men who were given talents to invest when the master went away. One was given five talents, did very well in investing, and brought in five more; another was given two and profited another two, but the third buried the treasure and did nothing to let it gain more. (Mt 25:14-30) Here, the talent refers to money¹⁰, a big sum equal to 6000 denarii. One denarius is a day's wage for a laborer. It is a lot of money. The talent was given according to his ability, a word which in Greek means power, might, strength, ability, and capability. Likewise, we have received from God talents according to our own power, ability or capability. From a financial perspective, the one who buried the talent on the ground was doubtful that it could generate any big returns - value, or interest. He failed to take the risk. How do we value our talents?

2) Money for betrayal: The second is about Judas who received 30 pricey pieces of silver from the high priests to help them catch Jesus. (Mt 27:3-10) Regretting his decision, Judas realized that he had betrayed an innocent man. He sold Jesus, turned him in exchange for silver, and satisfied the demands of the enemies of Jesus who needed to catch him. The values for which money was traded off are friendship, discipleship for the Kingdom, and trust. Judas' example clearly shows how money can become a short-sighted goal in exchange for betrayal.

Ponder the use of money in each of these two instances and gain wisdom from the way Jesus responded to each of those situations. Did Jesus say, don't use money? 'No.' In the first example, he told three persons to use money by favorably investing one's talents and warned us not to bury our treasures. Jesus calls us to 'love one another as I have loved you.' (Jn 13:34) and encouraged his disciples to value friendship: 'you are my friends because I have told you what the Father has told me' (Jn 15:15). He encouraged them to do good to others: 'when I was hungry, you gave me to eat; when thirsty, to drink; when in prison, you visited me; when suffering, comforted me...' (Mt 25) What other insights might you have on these and other stories that Jesus used to bring home wisdom? What other examples of Jesus' behavior would you cite that are helpful in forming good attitudes towards money?

***Evangelii Gaudium* (November, 2013)**

Pope Francis offers missionaries his thoughts on how to act in relationship with money. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he warns us strongly to say 'no' to the use of money when it makes us exclude others. We must avoid contributing to the culture of exclusion and the globalization of indifference which treat human beings as outcasts and 'leftovers'. Pope Francis encourages us to say *"thou shalt not' to an economic of exclusion and inequality"* because such an economy kills. (EG, 53) The excluded are waiting while the culture of prosperity deadens us and we end up being incapable of feeling the pain and compassion at the outcry of the poor. Our lifestyles tend to exclude others and there is enthusiasm only for a selfish ideal. (EG, 54)

Idolatry of money: Ethics is lacking in our financial system, a non-ideological ethics which would bring about a more humane social order. Pope Francis warns: 'Not to share one's wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs.' (EG, 55) The Pope states that the financial crisis of 2008 is a result of the dictatorship of an impersonal economy which lacks a truly human purpose. There is a big imbalance between the majority who are poor and those 'few' who enjoy the prosperity as a result of ideologies that defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation. The financial market has become a kind of a god, an idol. This makes it difficult for countries to realize the potential of their own economies and keep their citizens from enjoying their real purchasing power.

Money must serve, not RULE!

Pope Francis emphasized that 'the dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape **all** economic policies. (EG, 203). He exhorts everyone to a generous solidarity and to the return of economics and finance to an ethical approach which favors human beings. (EG, 58) He firmly states that the socioeconomic system is unjust at its roots and calls us to temper that unbridled consumerism with inequality which proves doubly damaging to the social fabric. (EG, 70).

The challenges articulated in the Gospels, Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes*, and Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* strengthen our sense of hope that the Holy Spirit is guiding our efforts to recover the joy and hope despite all the anguish and anxieties in the world today. These resources and many others help us to discern how the Church leads us in our response to money.

C. ACT: what does it mean to act in favor of the Kingdom?

ACT JUSTLY

Micah 6:8 calls us to heed God's call: *'This is what Yahweh asks of you... that you act justly, that you love tenderly, that you walk humbly with your God'*. In the third step of the inductive method, we plan and propose pastoral programs for action based on the SEE reflection results in identifying the signs of the times and on the JUDGE resources on how God might best speak to the situation through the Church. The values of hope and common good play an important part in this phase where the proposed action programs are the best manifestations of hope for the common good.

To apply the SEE-JUDGE-ACT method, I suggest that we look at the food and hunger issue. In my present work with International Congregations of Religious or ICR at FAO, we strive to learn as much as possible about food-related issues - food systems, land issues, seeds, nutrition/malnutrition, and food security/food sovereignty.

SEE: To generate the experiences of people the food issue, we could describe the 'signs of the times' from the following questions: what is your experience of the food problem in your lived reality? There are almost a billion people in the world today that suffer from the hunger problem. How does the problem of hunger impact you and others in the local situation? Who are the people suffering from hunger in your experience? What is WUCWO's experience of this problem? How would you assess its occurrence? What the root causes of lack of food? Why are people not eating adequately? What are your findings?

The month of October is the month in which the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome) focuses on this problem. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) gathers 142 countries to look at this problem yearly. I attended a FAO side event on October 14th where the Catholic-Inspired Organizations gave a presentation on 'Family Farming'. High-level Experts at the FAO offer solutions to this world-wide problem of food.

JUDGE: Pope Francis points to a case of inequality when food is thrown away while other people are starving. There is so much competition and survival of the fittest where the powerful feed upon the powerless. Masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized, without work, without possibilities, and without any means of escape. (EG, 53) He also made an appearance on behalf of Caritas Internationalis¹⁰ to appeal to people to share food with the hungry. The Pope's message to the FAO was read on October 16 which he said that 'to defeat hunger, it is not enough to meet the needs of those who are unfortunate or to help through aid and donations those who live in situations of emergency. It is necessary, instead, to change the paradigm of aid and development policies.'¹²

We can use the lens of the Bible and *Evangelii Gaudium* by Pope Francis who calls our attention to the culture of waste of food and the inequality seen in physical obesity vs. hunger. We gather these statements and positions from the Church to guide us in our search for a program of action to address the problem of hunger.

Judging also includes analyses of the problem which leads us to the root causes of hunger. There are two prevailing analyses of the hunger problem: One is, are people hungry because there is lack of food available to people? Multinational companies who accept this analysis tend to solve the problem through industrialized agriculture that uses terminator seeds, GMOs, chemical fertilizers, and mass-production of meat or other food products. Another analysis of the problem leads us to assert that the hunger problem stems from poverty or the inability of so many in the world today to buy the nutritious food that they need for wellbeing. If there are no jobs, how do people find sufficient income to buy food? The solution based on this analysis is different from that of the multinational companies that offer seeds. How does WUCWO plan your response to the problem of hunger due to the poverty of the people? The response might include sustainable approaches such as environment-friendly farming methods called agro-ecology, organic farming, small-scale family farms, healthy food from healthy soil.

ACT: How would we act to address this problem? This is the part of the reflection process in which practical wisdom plays a big part. If solutions are to be sustainable, we need to work on answers, approaches, and solutions that go beyond doling out food to the needy. Doling our food to the hungry is only a temporary solution and not sustainable. One advice which we hear often is this: "Give the hungry fish and they will eat for a day; teach them how to fish and they will eat for a lifetime." There are no easy answers to such problems of global scale. One good reason for engaging in the inductive method is so that the plan of action could be implemented in local areas where people are familiar with their situation. This way, there is good ownership of the program of action.

Corporate Conscience and SELF-Regulation

One trend today is the formation of a corporate conscience. Some decades ago, people started to look for guidelines for responsible investments. This is called CSR or **Corporate social responsibility**, also called **corporate** conscience, **corporate** citizenship or sustainable **responsible** business or **Responsible Business**) which is a form of **corporate** self-regulation integrated into a business model. Many groups buy stocks in businesses that enable them to hold accountable a particular corporation for their business behavior, e.g. wasteful use of the resources of the earth. CSR aims to embrace *responsibility* for *corporate* actions and to encourage a positive impact on the environment and stakeholders including consumers, employees, investors, communities, and others.

III. CONCLUSION

The aim of this presentation is to offer a reflection on the meaning of 'sowing hope for the common good' to deepen your understanding of and commitment to your role as sowers of hope. In summary, I have shared my understandings of hope and the common good, I presented the inductive method to help you arrive at an understanding of reality based on your own experience, presented some sources from the Bible and Pope's *Evangelii Gaudium*, as part of what the Church may want to say to your reality. We walked through the inductive method using food as a specific justice issue in the hope that

you would come up with a plan of action that you can own. You are women leaders who have chosen to focus on sowing hope as followers of Christ to reach out to others particularly those in need and vulnerable. I suggest the following points for WUCWO to consider as you continue to strengthen your role as sowers of hope. These are: a) Spiritual Practice; b) Incisive Women's Presence in the Church; c) Regular use of the Inductive Method in your Meetings; d) A Spirituality of Hope, and e) Strategic Plan to enhance your Role as Sowers of Hope effectively.

A. SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Hope is a positive and potent spiritual practice with the power to pull us through difficult times; it can be learned with practice.¹³ A few attitudes are: a) *patience*, an ability to tolerate delays and a willingness to let events unfold in their own time; patience is needed to give service to the vulnerable and weak; b) *courage* is an attitude of confidence even when facing the unknown; c) *persistence* or determination to keep going no matter what happens. Hope is the basic ingredient of optimism, a tendency to dwell on the best possibilities; a frequent companion of the spiritual practice of enthusiasm, which is also energizing.

WUCWO has Study days which give you opportunities to discuss and discern steps to strengthen your role as sowers of hope. Study Days are a good practice to keep your spiritual muscles toned. Like athletes – runners, swimmers, baseball/basketball players, football, tennis, and artists – pianists, writers, film directors – you would need to exercise regularly to keep your body in shape and be ready for the challenge of sowing hope.

Without hope, we would find it difficult to be patient. We would lack the courage to struggle against adversity, particularly when we hope to be in solidarity with those who are fighting for their rights to food, to basic needs, and to freedom of religion. We could quickly be discouraged and tend to expect the worst. It would be important to constantly practice 'hope' to face the challenges of your communities and groups for whom you have chosen to address situations of injustice. Hope is an orientation of the heart, a renewable energy source; it is grace of God; it never runs out and we can tap into it whenever we need it.¹⁴ We are blessed with inspiring saints/heroes who have reminded us of this truth in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds — Mohandas Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Dorothy Day, among others. Our spirits are also expanded by those who regularly face darkness and do not allow it to overtake them - human rights advocates, and people working for social justice in areas of conflict around the globe. All of these people, in the words of Ghanaian theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "wear hope like a skin."¹⁵

B. INCISIVE WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN THE CHURCH

Pope Francis wrote: "*We need to create still broader opportunities for more incisive female presence in the Church. (EG, 103).* We observe the absence of women in sacramental ministry, in leadership, and in decision-making arenas in the Church. Pope Francis said that 'the presence of women must be guaranteed in the very settings where important decisions are made both in church and social structures'.¹⁶ What would WUCWO do to ensure that this challenge becomes a reality in the next four years? What plans would you put in place specifically to welcome these opportunities when they emerge in your local areas or Regions? What kind of training would be desirable for the women of WUCWO to respond to the Pope's invitation to participate in decision making? How can WUCWO give

a distinct and unique contribution to the Church that encourages women's presence in the church today? How can WUCWO leaders take an active part in parishes, dioceses and other levels of decision making in ways that would expand the collaboration of men and women in the Church?

C. USE OF INDUCTIVE METHOD

Realizing the potential of the inductive method, I suggest that you use the inductive method. I hope that you would invite other women and men who can help you in this learning process. I think that the method would be good for WUCWO to use both on the local and global levels so that your response to local and world situations are more effective and longer lasting. Using the inductive method in an ongoing way at your local meetings for the next four years in parish or diocesan meetings would enable you to develop an openness to new theological insights, new knowledge of how God is present to your lived reality in today's world. You are actually in good company because Pope Francis uses this method which observers have observed that the method used in the Synod on Family is different under Pope Francis and calls it the inductive method which starts from the lived experience of family life.¹⁷

D. NEED FOR SPIRITUALITY OF HOPE

Actions, programs, and activities implemented by sowers of hope can be sustained only with a deep spirituality that ensures receptivity to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We need a spirituality of hope to strengthen us to continue to care for the fragile poor and the fragile Earth. We need a sustained determined lifestyle to help re-inforce the values of justice, peace, and integrity of creation.

When I say 'spirituality', I don't mean one-time spiritual practices, like praying the Rosary once or twice; taking part in the Eucharist sometimes when one feels like it; or giving to the poor when convenient or embarrassing NOT to do so. What I mean when I say develop a spirituality of hope, is a regular and systematic reflection and practice - actions, and activities – a way of life that is helpful to be in tune with the Spirit that gives you the inspiration to hold on to hope and to take up the cause of those who suffer from injustice and un-peace. We hear about the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, particularly in the hands of those who hate the followers of Christ. I encourage you to think together of those plans and processes that would lead you to become more astute in providing hope for those who have none and compassion and mercy to those who are suffering from injustice in their lives. A spirituality of hope will give you the strength as you seriously engage yourselves in working for the common good, a task that seems endless and could cause burn-out and ineffectivity.

E. WUCWO AS SOWERS OF HOPE

You are in for the long haul! I imagine that reflecting on the living history of WUCWO would propel you to discover even **new** meanings of your role as sowers of hope that you have willingly assigned to yourselves. To sow hope in situations that are messy and complicated, you will need stamina and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In our present world, there are many people who are in need of hope; the rate of suicides in the world today is overwhelmingly high. WHO (World Health Organization) reports that suicide is now among the three leading causes of death among those aged 15-44 (male and female).¹⁸ The sufferings of the people who need hope would surely produce hope for you individually and as a world union. Suffering will be part of your life as you get much closer to those whose lives are characterized by deprivation, inequality, and marginalization. Include them in the global community and learn how to

listen to them and their experiences. This mutual learning will open up deeper meanings for you as sowers of hope for the common good. The lives of Jesus and Mary, and of countless others who have suffered will prove that hope emerges in suffering. Be attentive to **how** the Holy Spirit is leading you to sow hope. Expect surprises along the way if you follow the promptings of the Spirit who is the essential guide to healing and making the ONE EARTH COMMUNITY whole.

Let me end with Pope Francis' challenge to all of us: *'In every generation the Church holds high the lamp of this hope before the world. Today let us ask whether our lamps are alight with the oil of faith, and to what extent we live as credible and joy-filled witnesses to our **hope** in God's promises.'*¹⁹

Are you ready to embrace this challenge?

Thank you for your attention.

Footnotes

1. Oduyoye, Mercy Amba, "wear hope like a skin"
www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/features.php?id=17926
2. Spiritual Practices: Hope at
<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/practices.php?id=12>
3. Bruggemann, Walter. 'Suffering Produces Hope'. Maryland: Vanlier Hunter, Jr. Memorial Lecture, Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies. 1998.
4. Zenit.org, Oct. 15, 2014
5. Dorr, Donal, 'Spirituality of Human Rights', *Doctrine and Life*. Vol 63. No. 8 pp. 33 – 42.
6. Pope Francis. *'Evangelii Gaudium' (Joy of the Gospel): 186*. November 2013.
7. Gerard Whelan SJ. 'Pope Francis and Inductive Theology', article submitted to the Tablet. 2014.
8. Tom Reese, 'How the Synod Process is Different under Pope Francis'.
<http://ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-stice/how-synod-process-different-under-pope-francis>
9. *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution of the World. 1965.
10. http://washingtonubf.org/BibleMaterials/Misc/Matt25b_msg.html. Biblical quotations from New Standard Version
11. <http://millennialjournal.com/2014/10/09/pope-francis-raise-a-voice-for-the-hungry/>
12. <http://www.news.va/en/news/francis-on-world-food-day-to-defeat-hunger-it-is-n>
13. <http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/practices.php?id=12>
14. www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/features.php?id=17926
15. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 103.
16. Zenit.org, Oct. 15, 2014
17. Tom Reese, 'How the Synod Process is Different under Pope Francis'.
<http://ncronline.org/blogs/faith-and-stice/how-synod-process-different-under-pope-francis>
18. WHO Report, see <http://www.befrienders.org/suicide-statistics>.
19. Zenit.org, October 15, 2014

Copyright to Sister Teresa R. Dagdag MM

October 19, 2014