



YOUTH  
PASTORAL  
NETWORK

**AFTER THE JUBILEE OF HOPE...  
WHAT NOW?**

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# SUMMARY



Editorial	3
After the Jubilee of Hope... what now? <i>Carles Gil i Sauer</i>	3
The Church, face of hope <i>Álvaro Chordi Miranda (Adsis)</i>	6
Being and being in the world <i>Miriam Subirana</i>	8



An unresolved thought on Hope <i>Martina Dotú Carrasco</i>	13
To educate is to generate hope, and hope gives life <i>Víctor Filella</i>	15



Be bold <i>Francisco Anaya Walker</i>	18
Plan RPJ 2025-27	20



Hope in noise: Helping young people find inner silence <i>Petra Kalmár</i>	23
Art as a Source of Hope <i>Núria Mateo Serra</i>	27
Hope <i>JJD</i>	30

# AFTER THE JUBILEE OF HOPE... WHAT NOW?

Carles Gil i Saguer / Father General  
Order of the Pious Schools



**H**ave you ever experienced something so intense that it leaves you feeling unsettled, with more questions than answers? Have you ever returned home after a life-changing experience, an encounter, a pilgrimage, a camp, a Jubilee, with your heart full, but also with a question lingering inside you: *how do you live this in your daily life?*

Many young people experienced the Jubilee in this way: as a special, luminous time, marked by encounter, journey, listening, and shared faith. Rome, St. Peter's, Tor Vergata, the streets full of life, San Pantaleo overflowing with youth, the feeling of being part of something big. It wasn't just a trip. It was an experience that touched something deep.

But the Jubilee does not end when we return home. That is when the most important part begins.

In the Bible, the Jubilee is not a celebration of a round number. It is a time that opens up the future. It is a grateful memory of what has been lived and, at the same time, an impulse to start again. It is freedom, reconciliation, justice, a new opportunity. It is listening, deep down, to the fact that history is not closed and that it can still flourish.

And that connects genuinely with our lives today.

We live in complex times. You know that well. Uncertainty, conflicts, pressure to perform, fear of the future. Sooner or later, a question arises: *What will become of me tomorrow? Which path should I take? What place are we called to occupy at this time?* Sometimes fatigue weighs more heavily than enthusiasm. Sometimes hope seems fragile or distant.

That is why talking about hope is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity.

Christian hope is not naivety or empty optimism. It is a real force that sustains us when we cannot see clearly. In a nutshell, **it is knowing that the Lord is on our side**, especially when the path becomes dark.

Perhaps the question is not only *where to find hope today*, but also learning to recognize in our own history *when hope truly sustained us*.

If you look back, you are sure to find traces: people who accompanied you, moments of prayer that restored your peace, words that came just in time, experiences in which you felt that you were not alone. Also names, witnesses of hope, who with their lives showed you that believing is worthwhile. That memory is an antidote to despair. It reminds us that God has already been there... and will be there again.

Saint Joseph Calasanz lived this way. In the midst of enormous difficulties, he never stopped trusting. *Praying, working, and hoping*, not as an escape, but as a daily decision.

His hope was not passive; it was active, concrete, committed to the lives of children and young people. That is why his legacy lives on.

Today, we too are called to be **bearers of hope**. Not alone, but in community. Hope is transmitted when we truly listen, when we accompany with respect and care, when we believe in others even when they cannot do so themselves.

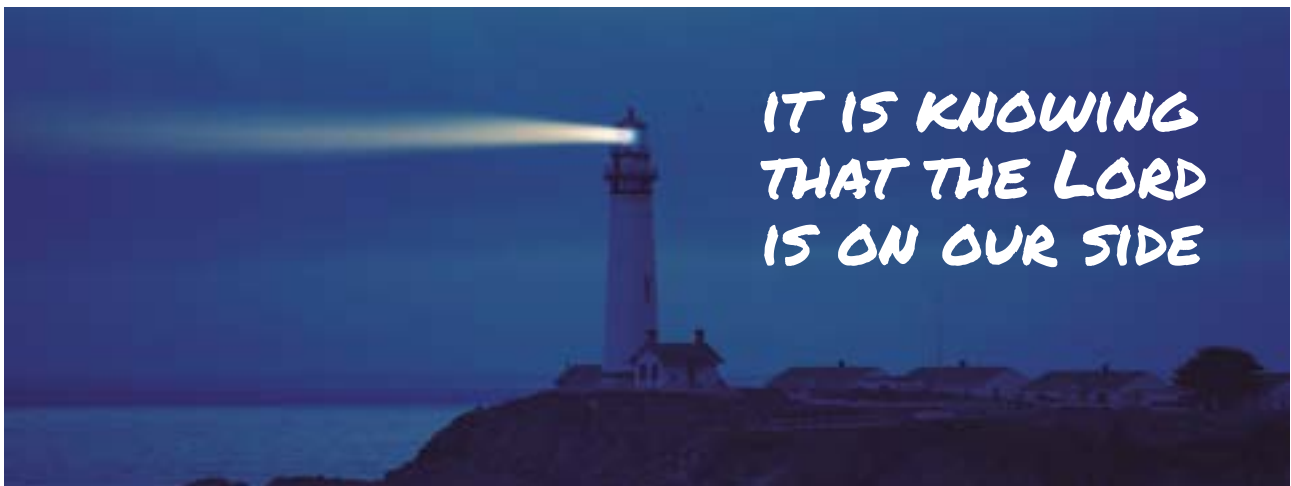
Perhaps this is the question that the Jubilee leaves us with and that opens this new stage: **Who today needs you to be a sign of hope for them?**

If we allow this question to accompany us, our faith will touch life more deeply, our pastoral ministry will be more intimate, and our lives will bear more fruit.

May this **new stage of RPJ in English** be a place where hope finds words, faces, and concrete stories. May it connect young people across Europe and the USA, giving voice to their questions, journeys, and commitments, and building bridges across cultures and realities. When hope is shared, it grows stronger. May this initiative be a living sign that our Priest mission continues to open paths of hope for the Church and for the world.

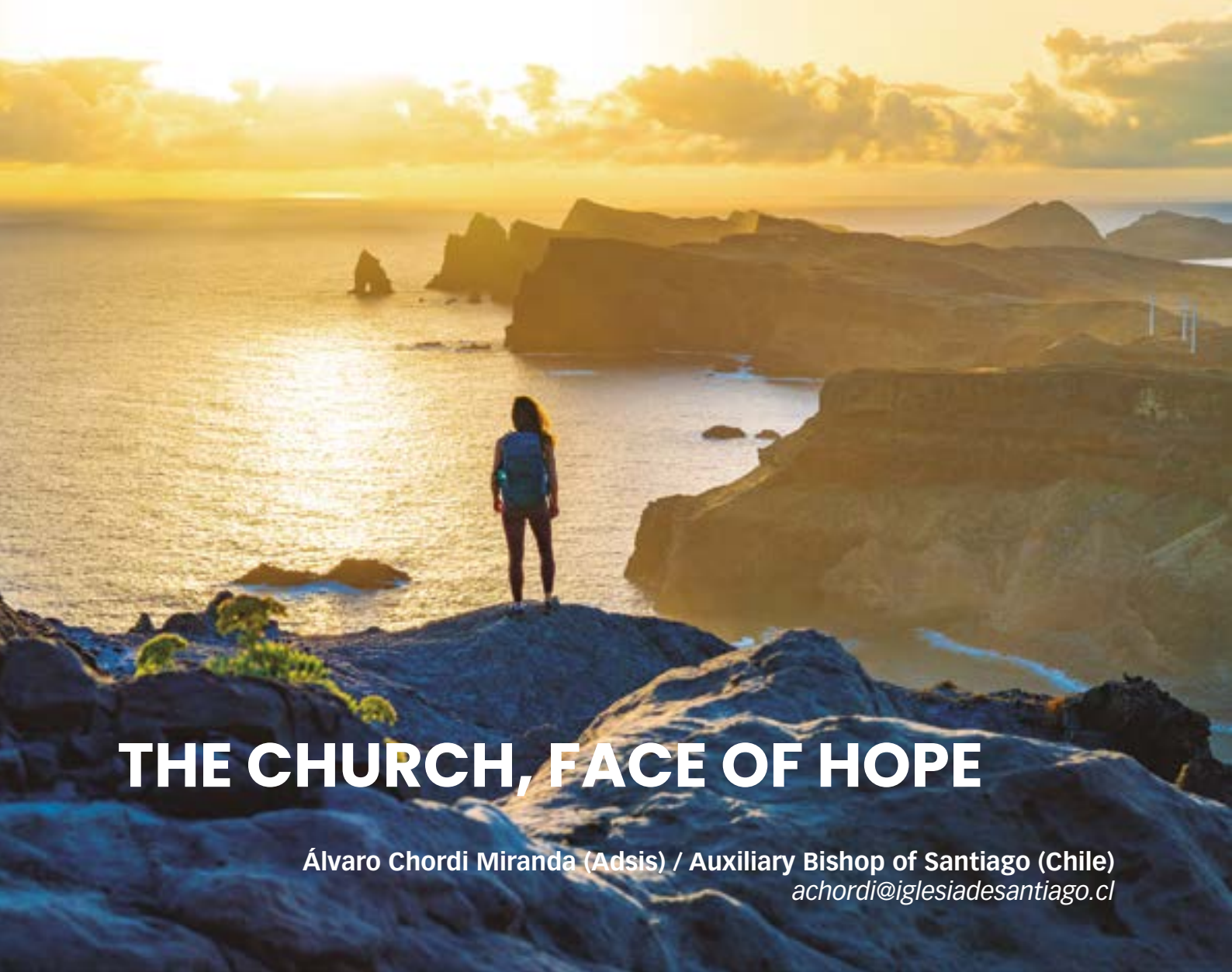
*Hope does not disappoint*; St. Paul encourages us. Not because everything will be easy, but because God is faithful, and when He walks with us, the future is built step by step, even in the midst of uncertainty.

St. Pantaleo, Rome, February 10, 2026.



OMEGA  
ENGINE





# THE CHURCH, FACE OF HOPE

Álvaro Chordi Miranda (Adsis) / Auxiliary Bishop of Santiago (Chile)  
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**C**ardinal Tolentino tells us that one of Rodin's best-known sculptures is a stone composition with two right hands of two different people whose forearms intertwine and elongate so that the fingers, at the highest point, touch, drawing a kind of arch. Its title is The Cathedral.

The cathedral is not only a sacred enclosure placed in a central place of a city, the Plaza de Armas, as in Santiago de Chile. Where our hands can be raised towards the sky, that will always be one axis of the cathedral. The other axis is drawn by the mystery of God, who draws close to us and embraces us, even if we do not realise it. Today we need hands to hold the soul of the world that is falling apart and amidst the unpredictability of the future that awaits us.

Normally we move between green hope and baleful fear, as Machado said. We can either retreat in the face of what is happening or rather risk it, gamble our lives. When there is more hope than fear, life opens the way, bets and projects become possible, life can be lived with dignity and meaning. When the world is threatened and in crisis, there is only one way of hope: love, which miraculously recreates the world.

'Hope is the central message of the Jubilee' (Spes non confundit, 3). The present is pregnant with hope. In every reality, however hard it may be, there is always the possibility of good, the capacity to break the spell of impotence. Hope



is woven with trust stretched out towards the future and gives wings to patience. It leads us to always look ahead with courage.

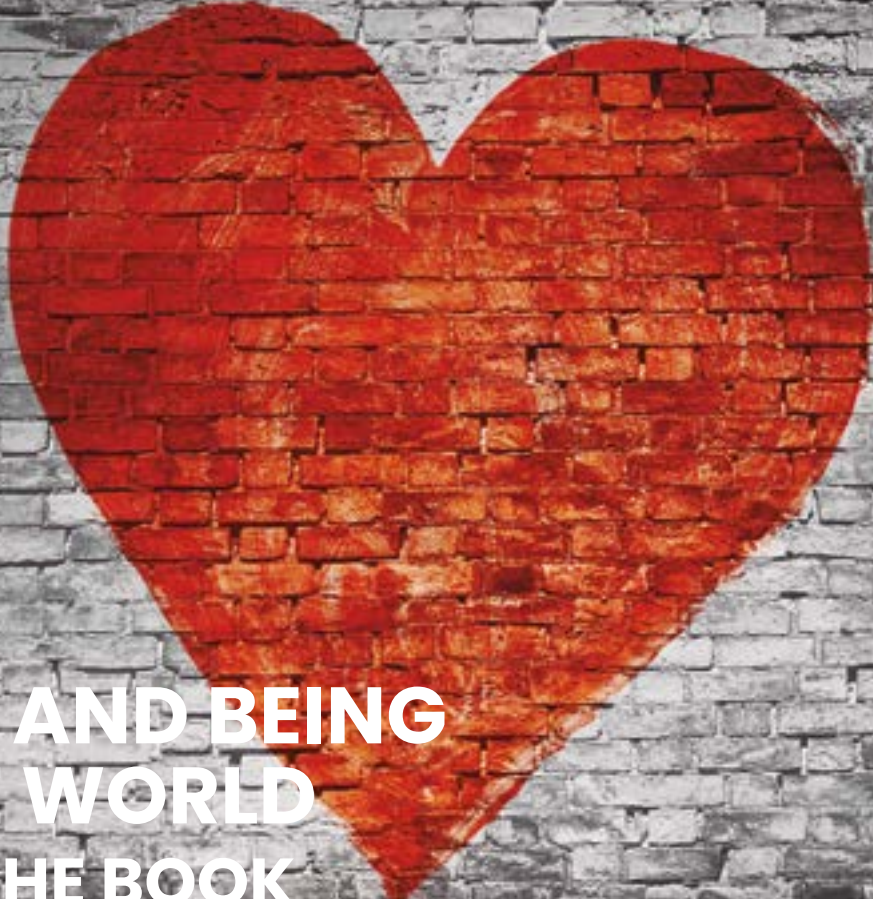
We evangelise young people by instilling hope. And we are invited to return to our roots, to recover our deepest identity, to set out on a journey. Jesus always goes before, in the midst and behind the pilgrim people. The kingdom germinates already in the pilgrimage. We are not lost, because the one who is the way, the truth and the life has left the path open: Jesus Christ.

Nor are we alone, but we walk together. Synodality is a symphony that makes us brothers and sisters and pilgrims of hope. It can be the way to overcome fragmentations and divisions within the Church, which

is called to a transformation that implies a structural renewal, which will not be possible without a profound spiritual change. This requires the commitment of all to build a more fraternal, inclusive and hopeful community.

Pope Francis has launched a special appeal to young people: to embrace synodality as a way of life. Today we need young sowers of hope and meaning, accompanying, consoling, compassionating, encouraging the sprouts of life that emerge in each person, in history and in creation. In the task of weaving hope, there are preferential places: the peripheries, the margins and the frontiers. May young people leave their mark on the Church, building bridges, tearing down walls and moving forward united in the love of Jesus from the gutters of history.





# BEING AND BEING IN THE WORLD FROM THE BOOK *EL PLACER DE CUIDARNOS*

Miriam Subirana / Editorial Kairós

**O**ur way of seeing the world influences how we feel, how we find ourselves and what we need. Some perceive the outside world as an unbearable pressure that annuls the vital and creative impulse. They feel traumatized and withdraw into a depressing loneliness. I like to see the world as a space of great beauty and multiple possibilities; a place full of life and beautiful people; an abundant nature full of colors; a land whose diversity offers many alternatives and great richness. This vision awakens in me an open attitude to be amazed, marveled and enriched; open to learn, share and love.

I do not ignore the dark aspects, but I do not focus on them. I act with forcefulness and responsibility to contribute to transform, diminish or eliminate certain challenging aspects of the world, such as global warming, lack of water or social injustice. For example, the electricity I use at home and at my workplace comes from renewable sources. I consume ecological and local products.

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Seeing evil, lies, terrorism and violence makes me worry, but I hold on to what gives us life and connect with compassion. There are people who see and feel the world as a danger, a constant possibility of deceit, theft and death, a threat to their lives. This causes them fear. They live with fear in their body. On the other hand, if they saw it as a wellspring of beauty that they can enjoy, a place where uncertainty awakens in them their desire to live the novelty, they would live it as an adventure full of beautiful moments. Otherwise, they will live it as a tragedy full of sorrows and failures.

Depending on how one positions oneself before the world and oneself, one will live in joy or in suffering, in trust or in fear. There are very hard life stories and perhaps one by oneself does not know and cannot change one's position before the events that one has lived and is living. I believe it is essential that we help ourselves to lighten our internal burdens and be able to position ourselves in the world by connecting with what gives us life and cutting connection with what crushes us internally and externally.

Positivity, caution and not taking things personally protect me. Following Miguel Ruiz's four agreements is wise: "Don't take anything personally. Regarding the opinion of others, for better or worse, it is better not to depend on it. We all have different views of the world, we can't know if the other person may have had a bad day. All the good or bad that someone could generate, they are provoking them first".

It is true that there are places that are dangerous, where thieves, rapists and aggressors abound. Being cautious helps you to protect yourself. But if even at home you live in fear, you lose strength and position yourself as a victim in the world. Do you want to stay that way?

It is important to be aware of how you position yourself in the world. You can position yourself as feeling helpless and powerless, or you can position yourself as overbearing and capable of handling anything, neither of which is the ideal position. You can feel that everything is a big comedy, a theater, and you position yourself according to the scene

you are in. You feel you are an actor in a costume according to the place and the moment, knowing that the costume is not you and that the moment will pass. You can play and laugh, trivialize and know that nothing is permanent, that the happiness of the moment will dissolve and the suffering of the moment will dissolve.

You can be alert and at inner peace while observing without being absorbed by what is happening around you. Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh is an example of how he took a stand in the face of violence and persecution. He held peace marches in Vietnam, his native country. Later, during the war, he went to talk for peace with American soldiers who were killing his people. His attitude was conciliatory and non-violent. He was an example of compassion in practice.

Another inspiring example of positioning oneself before the world in the face of adversity is that of the Jesuit Franz Jálcs. At the time he lived in Argentina, there was a military dictatorship. He wanted to bear witness that, although misery existed, it was possible to do something for the poor by peaceful means. He went to live in the slums. Many people interpreted this as support for the guerrillas and someone from his own community denounced him as if he were a terrorist guerrilla. Not just anyone denounced him, but someone from his own community, which must have increased his pain. In May 1976, the military arrested him and a companion from the mission. In short order, they were hooded, handcuffed and held captive for five months with their eyes blindfolded, hands bound and one leg strapped to a heavy cannonball. They were told they would be released soon because they found them harmless. However, their hopes were dashed as the weeks passed and they remained in captivity. Franz went through cycles of rage against the person who had falsely denounced them, then helplessness, immense sadness, fear and depression. He managed to cry in an intense cry. Despite these emotional cycles, he kept meditating and repeating the name of Jesus.

When he was released, he realized that the months of kidnapping and imprisonment

and the proximity of death, together with the constant repetition of the name of Jesus like a mantra, had provoked a profound purification within him. Jálics explains in narrating this episode of his life that “Stillness can set many things in motion within a person. By paying attention to Jesus Christ, we communicate with his healing power.”

There are other people who position themselves before the world with fears created by the imagination and phobias of their own mind. In other words, nothing to do with the experiences of Jálics. For example, a coaching client of mine was afraid of ending up in prison. Every time he saw the police, Jose feared that he would be caught and there would be a public scandal in the media. His life is one of great prudence, of respect for others, for the rules and regulations in force. There is nothing in his record that could land him in jail. He is a good father, a good husband, a good teacher and a good manager. However, his mind creates fictitious realities, based on movies and news and his own mental lucubrations, that he can be locked up in jail. This makes him live in fear and obsession.

Sometimes we suffer more with what we imagine than with what actually happens. One creates a mental reality and lives his environment from that mental creation, without perceiving the moment as it is with all its dimensions and perspectives. If you did perceive it, you would realize that most of the time threats only exist in your own mind. But even when they do exist, as in the case of Jálics in his kidnapping days, we can take time to quiet our minds and invoke the healing power of Jesus Christ.

You may be overwhelmed by so many stimuli that your attention is constantly distracted. If circumstances dominate you, you allow them to rule your life and your emotions, and then you feel anger, because things are not the way you want them to be; sadness, because it seems that what you had is slipping away from you and life is taking it elsewhere; disappointment and disillusionment, because you had put effort and commitment, and yet things remain the same or worse; fear and

dread, because you can be hurt and you can sink and drown. When anger, sadness, disappointment and fear invade you, life becomes difficult and you move in rocky, arid or thorny terrain, in shifting sands or in swamps with stagnant waters. Maybe then it's time to learn to surf.

Surfing the waves is to position oneself intelligently in the face of the unforeseen and the predicted. We don't know exactly which wave will advance or when, but what we do know is that one wave will come, and then another will appear. You overcome one situation and a different one appears. Surfing with the waves of life implies playing, creating and accepting that the wave is and comes, not judging it or fighting against it. Knowing how to fall and swim, daring, giving way to the other, dancing with the sea and the swaying of the waves, laughing at the game and laughing at oneself. To be flexible and train for the game, playing it.

Taking care of yourself is like surfing too. It is playing, creating, accepting, not judging, not fighting against, laughing, falling and getting up, daring, giving way to the other, dancing with the sea and the swaying of the waves, swimming, diving, delving into the depths, discovering beauty and marveling, invading silences and becoming absorbed in a timeless dimension where life passes slowly, not because it passes slowly, but because you savor every second. And let's not forget how important it is to laugh and to know how to laugh at yourself. Don't take yourself so seriously.

There are people who choose solitude and isolation as a way of life. They live in the world by isolating themselves in the mountains or in a small clan, which creates their world apart from society. One is fed up with so many winds, currents and waves, and withdraws to find tranquility. You may bring with you your inner and subconscious currents that you will have to deal with. You will need a good dose of meditation to clear those currents, but also to serve in action. If you are left alone, you will end up stuck. When we act with the purpose of serving, of being helpful, our inner self-centered currents dissolve. In any case,



the person may have to return to his or her family. Jack Kornfield explains many experiences, including his own, of people who left their family and went to Tibet or to a monastery elsewhere. Eventually, they had to return to their home country to settle and attend to “worldly” matters (inheritances, property and houses, recovering relationships, caring for sick family members, etc.).

In any case, there is a solitude in which one is not alone internally because one is connected and related, as Peter Schellenbaum explains: “There is someone who by nature is a solitary person and renounces clinging to people, intellectual or sentimental habits, ideologies and religions, that is to say, he renounces seeking support. He is so intimately bound to the world that for him there can no longer be either support or detention, since he identifies himself with the union to the world, with the world as relation, with the fluctuating universal subject. He does

not inflate his subjectivity to the limits of the world, but his subjectivity melts in the realization that identity is found in the intermediate space, as Buber puts it, in the relation. It is wonderful to be alone when that in which I am alone is the world.”<sup>105</sup>

Others choose to live at anchor on the high seas or moored to the harbor. They do not risk or move. Those who fear and see all the possible dangers stay in port. I have relatives who avoided sports because any sport presents risks to health and life. One can break bones or have avalanche accidents or other unforeseen events.

Really, the choice of attitude towards life and the world is a very personal one. You can choose to live confidently, offshore, and when you are tired return to port to recuperate and take care of yourself. Not to stay tied to the port, but to go back out to live the adventure of living with full strength, cultivating trust as a way of being, being and relating to the world.



# FEEL ING





## AN UNRESOLVED THOUGHT ON HOPE

Martina Dotú Carrasco / Dies Diferents, Catalonia Province

I have been thinking about what is Hope. What could it be or mean, or how do we feel it. My mind started wondering and eventually landed on the question “what is God?”. For both ideas, God and Hope, I come to the same conclusion: I don’t *know* (a second question arises: does it even exist?), but I believe in God, and I’m hopeful. Perhaps it is this irrationality paired with the lived experience in my body that make me believe in something both menial and colossal like Hope. I would never know, but I still choose to believe because I have lived it.

During my six years of volunteering in pastoral care, I thought (and it truly was a genuine belief) that whenever one of my teenagers, a family member, a friend or me were going through a rough time, our Hope relied on the fact that we were faithful. We participated in our parish, we prayed, we had been baptized, and had our first holy communion, some of us we were even confirmed. All the pain, sooner or later, would be relieved because we believed in God, and that gave us Hope that, therefore, the future would be okay, and the pain would go away.

I can’t seem to access this idea that the future will be okay anymore: the world is looking absolutely gray and in pain, bleeding, screaming for compassion... But I have been struggling so much to answer the question “*If* God exists, where is It and why is It not doing anything?”. Why is there so much silence among all of these cries for help, why is all this darkness allowed? But most importantly, can we remain hopeful to overcome it?

In pastoral care, I believe, we don’t even need to talk about huge global crises, but the smallest grief, the tiniest crack in someone’s heart, already puts the pain in front of our eyes while the person we are accompanying cries “This isn’t fair!”. This isn’t fair because I have done everything right: I live a good life, I take responsibility for my mistakes and I repair what I have broken, I try to honor my inner Christ. I was, and still am, so quick to find optimistic words, that sometimes even reinforce the idea of this retributive justice. I am as fast as possible at looking for Hope (where did it go?).

Not long ago I realized perhaps finding Hope, accessing divine Grace, needs an intimate one-to-one encounter with God, but also an intimate encounter with community. Hope, Grace, even the Resurrection, cannot be pushed into someone. We rush Hope, whatever kind of Love you can think of, because we are either deeply afraid of the darkness or in need to relief someone from a stabbing pain. Most of the time, without noticing it, Hope begins in the stillness of a dark night, just like Jesus's birth or Jesus's death.

It was also a dark night when Jesus prayed to God, "if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). We see a suffering Jesus in Gethsemane. There he acknowledges his pain, and he shares it with his disciples (Matthew 26:38). A recognition of the anguish seems like a chance to have an encounter with God in all honesty (I was once told to pray from there, to show my anger to God, to be sincere). The sharing with the disciples is not less important, for that matter. Gather with other people and share the burden, organize, and let the Holy Spirit do her thing. What an equally painful but beautiful process to witness. Does it seem like Hope is making an appearance now?

Professor Mariame Kaba has a famous quote on Hope. "Hope is a discipline." The research for Hope asks us to imagine and create new worlds, new realities (that, dare I say, already exist), to enter God's creation again and again. It's a daily practice. I'd like to paraphrase Marion Muller-Colard, a French theologian, on the present existence of Hope. Hope is not a «nostalgia of the future»<sup>1</sup>, but rather a present action. It is a divine duty nowadays. We have to put the work, since we can easily feel discouraged because our efforts do not seem to be making a change in a bleeding world like ours. Don't get me wrong: we can't and shouldn't pretend the pain doesn't exist and just be enthusiastic at all times. But rather think of Hope as a choir: when a long note needs to be held,

.....  
1 Marion Muller-Colard talks about Hope in her book *L'intranquillité* (ed. Bayard). However, I took this quote from her workshop "Croire. Qu'est-ce que ça change?" for the reflection week in Taizé.

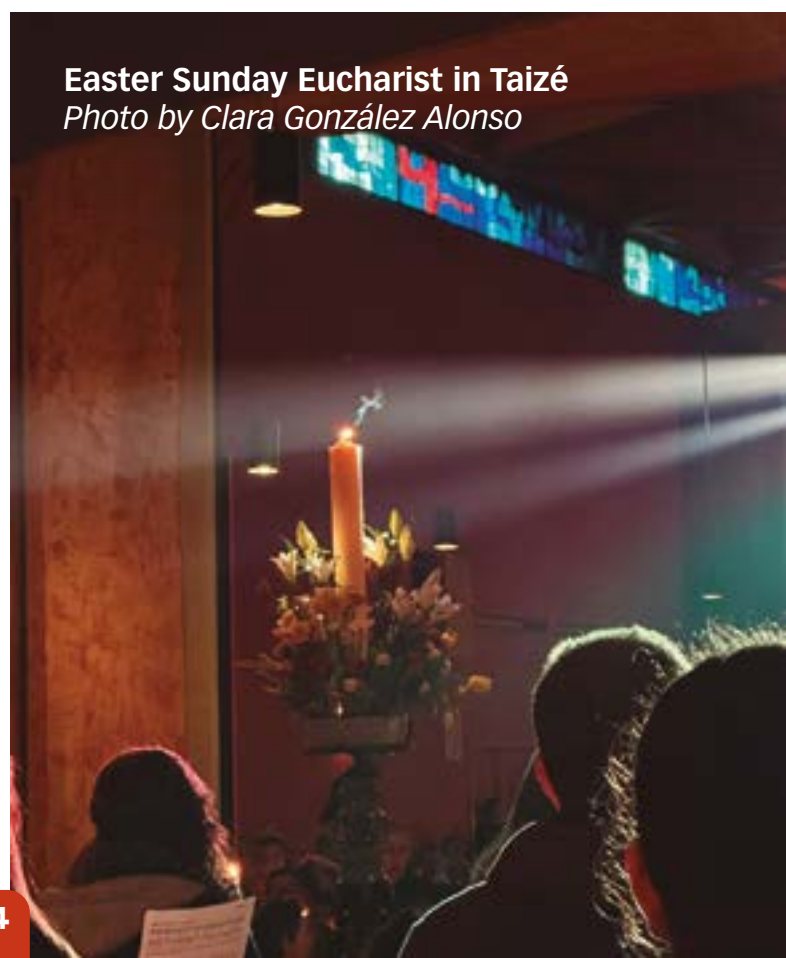


we take turns to breathe. We are taking turns to breathe now, but the chord has been going since the beginning of times, and it will keep going long after we've passed away.

Hope exists for me because I'm faithful, absolutely. But most importantly, Hope exists because I practice it every day. The first time I tried it was on Holy Saturday in the community of Taizé. On Good Friday, there was a sad atmosphere, and on Sunday of Resurrection, the joy was overwhelming. On Saturday, however, nothing happened. When nothing seemed to happen, actually, something deeply important took place: we hoped for the Resurrection, we kept praying and sharing our day with others (it's quite easy for us, because we already know the story, but how would that have been for Mary Magdalene?). Hope is our driving force for change to fully embody God's Love for us and for every living being.

Having said that: take a deep breath (let the Spirit in) and hold your note for as long as you can. When you feel out of breath, take a chance to listen, and join us anew whenever you have the ability to. Enter God's creation again and again with a new voice, because Hope is here and now for and because of you. "Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" (Is 43:19).

### Easter Sunday Eucharist in Taizé Photo by Clara González Alonso





# TO EDUCATE IS TO GENERATE HOPE, AND HOPE GIVES LIFE

Víctor Filella, Sch. P.

**H**er name is Carla. She was a student at one of the schools where I worked. After twenty years of not hearing from her, we met again. The reason was that she started working as a social worker at that very same school where we had met. A fellow Parist Father who works there gave me her regards and passed along her phone number. When I called her, she said, "I still remember the words you said to me one day in the courtyard: 'I can see that you could be an educator.'" I don't remember why I made that comment to her; maybe she was volunteering as a youth leader for an activity we called "Owl Night." The thing is, she told me, those words opened up a horizon of hope for her during a personally dark time.

This small experience makes me think about the impact of the messages we send to children and young people. As educators, we need to be aware that we can open cracks of hope in their hearts. Everything is within them. But just as tree buds need the light and warmth of spring's sunbeams to develop, we as people need an environment that illuminates our horizon.

Moha (Mohamed) joined the school in his second year of secondary school. He had arrived from Morocco with his mother just a few months earlier. Of

course, he didn't speak Catalan or Spanish. Like most boys and girls who have to go through a migration process, he was immersed in a grieving process. He had left behind much of his family, his friends, and his surroundings, and at the same time he lived with a certain anguish at having to integrate into a new reality. Fortunately, the school has a Welcome Classroom, a class that attends to newly arrived young people for a few hours of instruction during a period of one to three years, with a threefold objective: a) to begin learning Catalan; b) to help them resolve doubts about the subjects they take in the regular classroom; c) to participate in a smaller group where they can receive more personalized attention and, therefore, find it easier to share their experiences.

Moha's time in the Welcome Class was successful in terms of his bond with the teachers. Clearly, this space gave him the confidence to begin the process of migrant mourning. Regarding language learning, he was making progress in oral comprehension and expression, but he had many difficulties with reading and writing. During the three years he was in secondary school, he participated in the Welcome Class (more hours at the beginning, fewer at the end). However, he was not able to obtain the certification for this educational stage. Therefore, he was directed to a vocational training course specifically for students who have not passed compulsory secondary education. It is a course that, if passed, grants access to regulated vocational training (the kind a student who has passed secondary school can enter).

Currently, Moha is taking this special vocational training course. From time to time, he comes to see us (more at first, less now, which is a good sign). Also, for the past three years, he has been participating in the Esplai (a leisure-time education program that the school offers on Saturday afternoons). He has a great relationship with the counselors and the other young people. I imagine he still struggles significantly with literary skills, but I trust he is making progress. What is clear is that today's Moha is in a better position to make his way in life than he was

a few years ago. He seems to have more confidence in his abilities. He is gradually taking the helm of his life. Again, it's all up to him. He just needed, and still needs, an environment that helps him see the horizon with hope.

Surely, each of us can recognize in our lives those people who have illuminated our personal horizon, who have helped us see it with hope. The passage of years allows us to view life with greater perspective, and then we can better identify the darkneses we have traversed and the lighthouses that helped us emerge from them. We will surely agree that, generally, those lighthouses have been people who were by our side during certain stages of our lives, for a shorter or longer time, but always with one quality: they have firmly believed that there is hope for our lives. They have believed that, within us, there is a seed, perhaps like a mustard seed, with the strength to grow and become a fruitful bush. Being a counselor, catechist, or teacher; a father, a mother, or a friend is to be someone's companion on the journey. If we see this potential in them, we can be the ones radiating this light that illuminates their horizon.



# SHARING

# ING





## BE BOLD AN EXPERIENCE THAT SHAPES YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

Francisco Anaya Walker, Sch. P. / Devon, Pennsylvania

*"This has shaped my life. I remembered many things that I thought I had already overcome. Now I realize that I need help, but I didn't dare say so. Thank you for helping me recognize it." ANP*

*"Today I made an important decision in my life. I couldn't go on living this way. It won't be easy, but I'm determined to take a different path. I know I can count on your help, and I thank God for this new opportunity. Finally, I'm happy to be starting a new chapter in my life." JPH*

*"I have been involved in Youth Ministry for 20 years. Many young people thank me for what I do, but I cannot find the words to express how grateful I am for all of this." CHG*

**T**hese are three of nearly eighty testimonials from people who share with us what this experience has meant to them. "Be bold" (*Atrévete*) is a program of the Youth Ministry of St. Petersburg, Florida, USA, which brings together young people and ministers from different parishes.

It consists of a three-day retreat that functions as part of the pastoral plan of that diocese. The success of its results is due, in large part, to that connection with a global pastoral plan. It is by no means an isolated experience, but is well integrated into an itinerary of formation, prayer, and service.



For some participants, this is a new experience. We could say that in some cases it is a program of first evangelization. It is the first light of hope that some young people see after walking for years in the darkness of loneliness, sadness, and emptiness of meaning. In our context of immigrants in the United States, this darkness is much more common than anyone could imagine from afar.

For others, who have been on a long journey of faith, this is a call to greater commitment to people who reach out for help. Some participants have been involved in pastoral ministry for years, but during the retreat they discover that something in their own lives needs to change. In these cases, I am reminded of Pope Francis' insistence on the conversion to which we are all called.

The coordinating team's style is entirely synodal. Each member shares their knowledge, experiences, reflections, and service.

The preparation for the retreat is very careful and always subject to review. No one presents themselves as the protagonist who has the final say. On the contrary, they listen to each other and act with the clear conviction that the Holy Spirit is the protagonist. Then, in that mutual listening, they discern the path they must follow.

The great commitment and passion of these pastoral agents in preparing so many details, such as music, activities, food, decoration, etc., is striking.

We could describe here many details about the retreat, its psychological foundations, its theological insights, and hundreds of testimonies.

But for now, we only intend to open a small window to peek into this corner of the world where there are ecclesial communities that are surprisingly active, youthful, and growing.





## PLAN RPJ 2025-27

**T**he Youth Pastoral Network faces the years 2025-27 with new planning, the result of the work of all the teams, together with the advice of Catholics in Network. We are four teams that animate the work of the different areas. We present below the objectives and main actions of each of the teams.

Much life in this process of transformation is marked by the opening to Africa and Europe and USA, by the digitalization of the contents, the expansion of the educational offerings and the effective dissemination for a greater reach.

If you feel that your institution could also participate in any action, or in any team, please do not hesitate to contact us at [redpj@rpj.es](mailto:redpj@rpj.es)

## IMPULSOR TEAM

### Objectives:

1. Continue updating our youth ministry proposal by proposing reflection, training, resources and new experiences for youth ministry agents as the main recipients of our mission.
2. Generate alliances with more ecclesial institutions that want to participate and/or collaborate with RPJ and with more youth pastoral agents: catechists, high school religion teachers, university pastoral, Christian influencers...
3. Develop new fundraising strategies with those responsible for management through advertising offers, publications, grants, benefactors...
4. Foster more dynamics of collaboration and communication between RPJ institutions through joint planning, specific consultations and dissemination of our institutional youth pastoral proposals.
5. Consolidate work processes by accompanying each RPJ team to improve the identity, systematization, efficiency and impact of our actions.

## CONTENT TEAM

### Objectives:

1. Generate spaces for reflection and resources on youth ministry that serve pastoral agents.
2. Expand and diversify the way of transmitting content through different formats in a transition to digital and audiovisual, also renewing our website.
3. Consolidate the Contents team for a better follow-up of the contents proposal of each Magazine incorporating Latin American authors and some African and Asian ones.

## FORMATION TEAM

### Objectives:

1. To offer pastoral accompaniment to institutions and youth group leaders to orient evaluations, pastoral quality processes and elaboration of pastoral projects with young people from the keys of the Synod of the young people.
2. Create online RPJ training resources in various formats through our website to strengthen the capacities of youth pastoral agents in alliance with the Universidad Cristóbal Colón.
3. Sharing formative itineraries of the different institutions of the network to enrich us.

## COMMUNICATION AND ICT TEAM

### Objectives:

1. Define and carry out this year's communication strategy to meet the objectives of the RPJ.
2. Support internally to the other RPJ teams to help in what they need at the technological level and communicate relevant information to all RPJ institutions.
3. Increase the diffusion among the institutions and their communication managers that participate in the RPJ of their youth ministry proposals: retreats, campaigns, different experiences...



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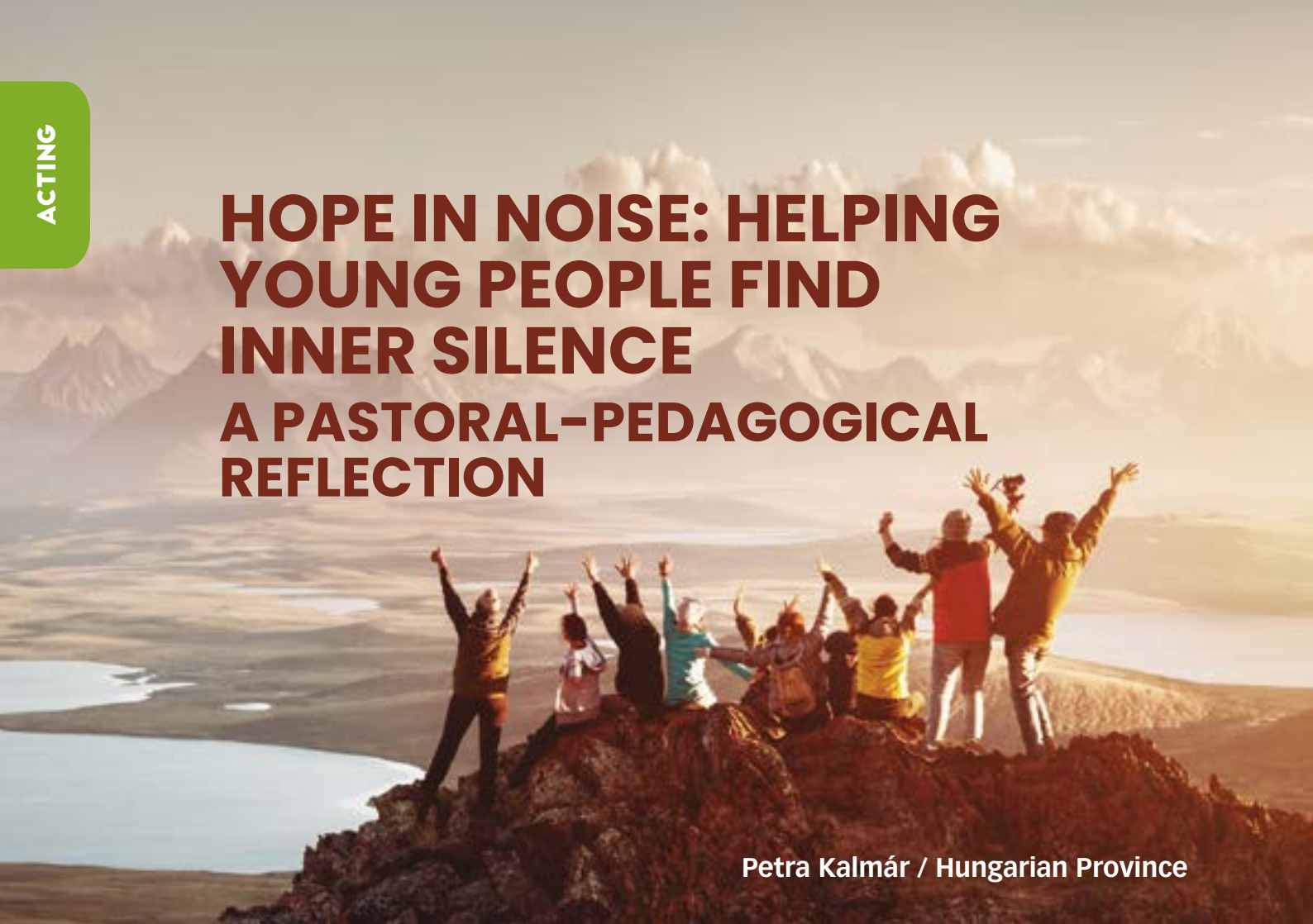
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# HOPE IN NOISE: HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE FIND INNER SILENCE

## A PASTORAL-PEDAGOGICAL REFLECTION

A group of young people are standing on a rocky mountain peak, celebrating with their arms raised in the air. The background shows a vast landscape with a lake and mountains under a warm, golden sunset sky.

Petra Kalmár / Hungarian Province

### Introduction

**T**he human longing for silence is profoundly anthropological; it is not merely a desire for rest or escape, but a return to the inner space where hope can take root. Silence, however, does not arise spontaneously. It must be learned, practiced, and - perhaps most importantly - accompanied. In the Piarist tradition, silence is never a passive state but a pedagogical and spiritual space. For Saint Joseph Calasanz, education always unfolded in God's presence, and within that presence, silence was as formative an instrument as the spoken word. The real question is not only how we can quiet the lives of young people, but how we can transform silence into a place where hope is born.

Recent research among adolescents increasingly shows that attentional overload fuels anxiety, identity confusion, and difficulty in making decisions. Inner noise creates an environment in which young people constantly evaluate their own worth, performance, and relationships. The world around them often suggests that value is measured by volume: what is noticeable is what counts.

Christian pedagogy proposes a different perspective: silence is not the realm of invisibility but the realm of truth. Here, the deep and gentle voice that does not compete for attention can finally be heard - shaping the human heart from within. This is the space where hope "*grows out of silence.*" For young people, silence is therefore not a luxury but a formative power. The experience of inner presence - of one's own heart and of God - becomes a stable point of reference to which they can return even when the external noise overwhelms them.

## Christmas as the silence of presence: Emmanuel - God With Us

The pastoral significance of silence is deepened by the message of Christmas. The name *Emmanuel* - "God with us" - is not merely a theological statement but an experiential invitation: God's presence is encountered not at a distance but in the subtle textures of daily life. The theology of presence teaches that God approaches us not outside our experience but in its deepest layers.

Silence is therefore not withdrawal from the world but entry into the space where the human heart attunes itself to the quietly flowing, yet transformative presence of God. When we guide young people into practices of silence - whether through a few moments of inward attention, a meditative posture, or contemplative prayer - we are teaching them how to inhabit the Emmanuel-presence. The pedagogy of silence thus becomes a Christmas message: God often reveals Himself in the delicate silence of the soul.

## The silence of Bethlehem: Great things are born in hiddenness

The symbolic power of Jesus' birth speaks with surprising relevance to today's "cult of visibility," in which many young people feel that only what is impressive, shareable, or celebrated matters. The Bethlehem narrative follows an entirely different logic. The Savior of the world is born in the quiet of a remote stable, almost unnoticed. In this we encounter the mystery of hidden growth: the greatest transformations often unfold where nothing remarkable seems to be happening.

This insight is liberating for pastoral and pedagogical work. Not everything needs to be "produced," and not every step must be publicly validated. The quiet spaces of inner life - prayer, contemplation, or even a silent school corridor - can become Bethlehem-like places for young people: small, unassuming yet decisive spaces where deep growth begins - self-knowledge, trust, relationship with God, hope.

Christmas is therefore not a nostalgic story but a profound anthropological lesson: salvation begins in silence - and often continues there.

The Hungarian Jesuit spiritual writer Péter Mustó expresses this beautifully: *"The growth of life happens in silence and darkness. Not when everything is clear. Not when you know where you are going. Learn to wait with trust. Your soul and your life need time to unfold. God is working in you and around you even when you feel nothing. You practice this surrender in prayer: an attentive, curious presence that strengthens trust. It does not spare you from what hurts. It helps you see with new eyes and make peace with what is."*

## The culture of noise and the inner space of young people

The lives of today's youth are defined by constant interruption. MIT sociologist Sherry Turkle calls this *the culture of disconnection*, in which young people drift between short, fragmented cycles of attention with little time left for deeper processing. Yet external noise often pales in comparison to the internal noise: anxiety, performance pressure, conflicting expectations, and fluctuating self-worth can be just as loud as any phone notification.

One of the central aims of Piarist pedagogy - "to support the personal unfolding of young people" - cannot be achieved without cultivating inner space. Accompaniment is therefore not merely teaching or offering programs, but initiating young people into interior attention. Silence is not only a spiritual instrument but an educational necessity - one that heals on mental, identity, and relational levels alike.

## Hope as the fruit of silence

Theologically, hope is the virtue rooted in God; psychologically, it is a stabilizing inner dynamic. According to Daniel Goleman's research, without inner focus - without the ability to reflect, sense, and understand one's own emotional states - people easily lose stability and with it the lived experience of hope.



Christian spirituality speaks of the same dynamic, in a different vocabulary but with the same insight:

- the slow, repetitive rhythm of the Psalms,
- the meditative cadence of the rosary,
- the savoring pace of Ignatian contemplation,
- the hesychastic tradition of Eastern Christianity,
- the unhurried steps of pilgrimage

All are spiritual forms in which hope becomes palpable. Silence is not a static state but a movement: an opening toward something greater than oneself.

### Why is teaching silence so difficult today?

For many adolescents, silence feels strange or even threatening at first. Several factors contribute to this:

- **Silence holds up a mirror.** One may be frightened by what they find inside: unprocessed desires, anxieties, uncertainties.
- **Silence feels like a performance.** Many fear doing it “wrong”: not being able to sit still or failing at meditation.
- **Silence is associated with boredom.** For a nervous system used to constant stimulation, slowing down initially feels monotonous.

Accompaniment therefore means not forcing silence, but creating a safe and welcoming frame for it:

- with patient, accepting presence,
- with clear, predictable structure,
- with gradual progression,
- with authentic adult example,
- with the conviction that silence is not a performance but a gift.

Forming young people in silence is above all a relational process.

## The Pastoral-Pedagogical meaning of silence

Three fundamental pastoral dimensions shape this work:

- *Presence*: In silence there is not emptiness but deepened presence. One begins to perceive oneself, the other, and God. This initiation into presence is a cornerstone of Piarist accompaniment.
- *Relationship*: Silence reveals that the young person is not a “project” or a list of issues but a person. The experience of being heard can itself become a moment of healing.
- *Hope*: Silence opens a reality in which the young person discovers that God is greater than their fears. Hope is not denial but a wider horizon.

The role of the accompanying adult - A presence that invites into silence

For young people, the method is secondary; the companion’s presence is primary. The authentic guide:

- embodies a silence that is not emptiness but receptivity; not withdrawal but openness; not loss of control but trust,
- does not fear silence but recognizes in it the possibility of graced and unexpected encounters,
- asks simple, gentle questions (“What was this silence like for you?”), helping interpretation without expectation or moralizing,
- accompanies the difficulties that arise - knowing that silence may surface pain, the beginning of healing,
- bears witness to hope, not through theory but through the transparent authenticity of their own spiritual life.

The communal dimension – Silence as a bonding force

Though silence is a personal experience, its communal form can be even more powerful. Shared silence:

- reduces competition,
- fosters a sense of breathing together,
- gives rhythm to the group,
- strengthens trust,
- restores attention toward one another.

Even a brief silence can form identity: *“Here we are together; I do not need to prove anything.”*

## Concluding reflection

The story of Elijah teaches that the divine word is not necessarily born where we expect it, but where it *can* be born. Silence is not a reward or technique but the space where the deeper layers of reality begin to move. For young people, this recognition is liberating: they do not need to be loud to be valuable, nor impressive to be loved, nor conspicuously spiritual to encounter God.

Hope is not simply the alternative to noise; it is another way of inhabiting reality. In silence, young people discover that what seems weak may be a beginning, what is quiet may be true, and what is hidden may be the slow-growing life within them. The companion’s task is not to provide answers but to remain present with this slow-unfolding mystery - just as Mary pondered the secrets of that first Bethlehem night.

The quiet voice of hope is not merely an inner feeling but an invitation: to attend to who I am, who is beside me, and the One who accompanies us as “God with us.” Once a young person learns this attentiveness, silence is no longer emptiness but home: the space of encounter, growth, and the future being born. In this space, the world’s noise no longer defines them, but the deep, gentle, and unwavering presence on which every Christian hope has rested since Christmas.



# ART AS A SOURCE OF HOPE



Núria Mateo Serra / *Dies Diferents*, Catalonia Province

Frida Kahlo, *Tree of hope* (1946). Oil on masonite, 55.9 x 40.6 cm. Private collection (París).

## "ART IS A PRAYER,"

**A**ntoni Tàpies said in an interview in the late 80s. Like many other artists of the 20th century, he understood creativity as an unstoppable, continuous search for meaning—a way to express one's most intimate concerns. Like a prayer, art projects a deep desire, an intention; ultimately, a particular form of hope. One can compare art and prayer because both contain an active dimension: they require the subject to intentionally reflect on an idea and focus all their will on making it real, hoping that someone—or something—will listen. Both praying and making art are acts of transformation. It is no surprise that art holds a contemplative, almost spiritual quality. Since the beginning of time, humans have relied on art to express their deepest thoughts and questions: from Palaeolithic caves and Gothic cathedrals to altarpieces, Renaissance masterpieces and avant-garde art.

When speaking of artworks that create future, reveal inner strength, or convey deeper meaning, one could say that art and hope form an unbreakable bionomy. They share the human impulse to transform reality when reality is not enough—not beautiful enough, not reliable enough, not liveable enough, and of course, not hopeful enough. Art manifests a possibility, something the artist creates from scratch with the power to expand and reshape the reality that needs to change. Hence, it is no coincidence that in the darkest moments of History, art has been either a violent weapon or a healing remedy. Artists have sought refuge in their canvases, behind plaster surfaces, or between the pages of secret notebooks—hoping for better times, longing for the light they had lost.

But art is also the greatest reflection of resistance and trust. All the beliefs that shape a person can be reflected on a canvas. To resist is to narrate, to imagine, and to preserve humanity. To hope that all the pain you feel now will someday turn into something beautiful. A powerful example of this is the artist Abu Malik al-Shami, a 22-year-old Syrian who, in

2016, filled the Darayya neighbourhood of Damascus with paintings calling for peace and an end to the war in Syria. He fought for his country during the day and protested through art at night. Art can hold this contradiction with ease because it can contain human experience, transforming its meaning, and generating new possibilities—possibilities that seem impossible, like peace.

Yet it takes great courage to hope—almost as much as it takes to love. To hope is to act, and in a time when wishing for something feels difficult, hoping becomes an act of resilience. It takes courage because it requires surrendering, trusting a greater power, letting go of control. Artists who imagine a more beautiful reality—one that doesn't feel wrong—are not naïve. Hope does not avoid pain, but it makes pain bearable; it does not guarantee happiness or accomplishment, but it gives meaning, something to live for.

A universe shaped by a wounded body, the construction of identity, and a resilient existence is the world of Frida Kahlo. She painted *Tree of Hope* (1946) after a back operation that forced her to wear a steel corset for eight months, leaving her with no appetite and great pain. Still, she was encouraged to write letters to her friends and to paint. In the work, one can see a gloomy sky where the sun and the moon divide the landscape into two halves: one illuminated and the other darkened. At the centre, Frida sits crying, dressed in a colourful Tehuana dress. Despite her tears, she exudes firmness and dignity. Right behind her, on a hospital bed, lies another Frida: anesthetized, her surgical wounds still open and dripping blood. The seated Frida holds a pink orthopaedic corset, while in her other hand she carries a small flag with lyrics from the song *Cielito Lindo*: "Tree of hope, stand firm." With this painting, the artist chooses trust—she chooses to believe that she will get better despite the pain and that her reality will change. Art allows her to do that; it becomes her shelter and her source of hope.

The bond between art and hope reaches one of its highest expressions in the perfor-



Street art by Abu Malik al-Shami, Darayya (Damasc), 2016.

mances of the 20th century. Many actions embody the idea of resisting through hope. One of my personal favourites is *Tatlin's Whisper #6* (2009), by Tania Bruguera, where the artist handed a microphone to members of the public, granting them one minute of free speech in a context of political censorship. It exemplifies trust in the collective voice, in the power of words, and in the possibility of change. Another powerful work is *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002) by Francis Alÿs, in which a hundred volunteers moved a sand dune by just a few centimetres—showing that community action and small contributions matter. That faith, that hope, can truly make a difference. Finally, one of the most celebrated performances is Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1964), in which the artist offered her body to the audience, allowing them to cut pieces from her clothing. The performance tests trust in human behaviour: the hope that human beings will not choose violence when given the chance. Ono had to cancel the performance a couple of times due to men crossing boundaries and harassing her.

In conclusion, hope is never easy. Only those who believe that a better reality is possible find the courage to fight for it. And yes, hope can fail. But art is the perfect ally on this journey: it makes it easier to trust the process, to imagine new possibilities, and to long for a change that may already be moving toward you.



# HOPE

JJD



I pray.

I need.

I want.

I desire.

I crave.

I envy.

I yearn.

I pine.

I grieve.

I pout.

I beg.

I despair.

I renounce.

I regret.

I abandon.

I delude.

I deceive.

I rationalize.

I ignore.

I take.

I lose.

I concede.

I recede.

I ideate.

I delegate.

I relegate.

I investigate.

I instigate.

I try.

I cry.

But in all of these I do not hope.

In my better moments, I live in hope.

In my better moments, I live in hope informed by faith.

In my best moments, I live in the Spirit.



An illustration of several diverse hands of various skin tones and ages reaching upwards and holding each other. The background is a textured blue with white speckles, suggesting a sky or water. The hands are arranged in a circular pattern, symbolizing unity and support.

**"I INVITE EVERYONE TO  
RENEWED HOPE,**

FOR HOPE SPEAKS TO US OF SOMETHING DEEPLY  
ROOTED IN EVERY HUMAN HEART, INDEPENDENTLY  
OF OUR CIRCUMSTANCES AND HISTORICAL  
CONDITIONING. HOPE SPEAKS TO US OF A THIRST,  
AN ASPIRATION, A LONGING FOR A LIFE OF  
FULFILLMENT, A DESIRE TO ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS,  
THINGS THAT FILL OUR HEART AND LIFT OUR SPIRIT  
TO LOFTY REALITIES LIKE TRUTH, GOODNESS AND  
BEAUTY, JUSTICE AND LOVE... HOPE IS BOLD; IT CAN  
LOOK BEYOND PERSONAL CONVENIENCE, THE PETTY  
SECURITIES AND COMPENSATIONS WHICH LIMIT  
OUR HORIZON, AND IT CAN OPEN US UP TO GRAND  
IDEALS THAT MAKE LIFE MORE BEAUTIFUL AND  
WORTHWHILE.

**LET US CONTINUE, THEN, TO ADVANCE  
ALONG THE PATHS OF HOPE."**

POPE FRANCIS  
FRATELLI TUTTI 55

**icce**

*Conectamos para educar*