

DON'T GIVE UP for Lent



Whatever you may be giving up for Lent, don't give up hope.

Yes, it's hard to look at the world and not feel some concern, or even despair; the daily news seems to be a litany of sorrow, from economic travails and campus shootings to the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile to war and famine all over the globe. It's a lot to absorb and it wears people down. Some choose to react by becoming bitter or angry. Some become selfish. Some simply turn away -- from their fellow man and from God.

But as people of God, we must be people of hope. We cannot turn away. We cannot allow the darkness in the world to threaten the light of the Lord. In trying times, perhaps more than in any other, we have a responsibility to God and to each other to choose hope, to share with the world our shining conviction that "in all things God works for the good of those who love Him," and therefore, He will see us through.

A friend shared with me this week that "worry is an act of rebellion against God." How dare we believe that we know better than He what will or should happen next! How can we not trust Him enough to hope? Imagine if all the time we spend in worry were spent in hope instead. If all the energy we expend in trying to second-guess God were directed to hopeful prayer and optimistic obedience, think of what we could accomplish.

God offers us hope -- not just for the immediate future, but the ultimate hope of eternal life. If we truly believe in Him, we are confident in His will and in His plan for His people. We must be brave enough to shed our worry and embrace His hope. We must shine with the brilliance of that hope that others may see its power and be encouraged to embrace it.

On our Lenten walk together, let us leave bitterness and worry behind. Let us join hands and hearts in optimism. Let us be people of hope.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13