

Advent Reflection

December 4, 2020

*HOPE*

**Romans 5:1-5** NRSV

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

*Reflection by Mary C.*

This scripture can be a comfort, but sometimes not when we're at the beginning of suffering, especially if those next steps, endurance, character, hope seem far away! There have been times when I've been on the treadmill of life, making no progress through this process. Jumping off an actual moving treadmill is unwise, as is avoiding these steps of endurance, character, and the final goal, hope.

We have the advantage of God's love and the teachings of Jesus to guide and help us to move from suffering, through our way to hope, but many times humans need someone with flesh and bones, a face and hands of caring, words of comfort, and the kindness of holding on to us and not letting us give up.

Countless times I have been sustained and upheld through difficult times by both God's and human hands, especially when I had lost a kidney to cancer. Through such frightening times I never lost my faith in God's presence, but the kindness of those flesh and bones people made my burden so much lighter, as they reflected God's love and promises through His son, Jesus, the Christ.

Thank you, God, for your invisible hands of love and care, and for those visible ones offered by flesh and blood people. AMEN