



Dear Mission Partners,

What is creative hope, and why is it significant for the IU community? I recently saw a picture of a bird on a branch with the caption, “Hope is like a bird that senses the dawn and carefully starts to sing while it is still dark.” This bird reminds me of the words of St. Paul found in Romans 8:24-25. “For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.”

Hope is not, like good habits in general, the outcome of repeated acts or the product of our own industry. Hope is a theological virtue that is freely given to us by God. We have not earned it; but we do have to practice it, just as we must do if we strive to grow in any virtue. A virtue is a good habit that grows with practice.

The plural—*hopes*, is revealing. Without God, in whom all things find their unity, hope disperses. Without God there are hopes, but no hope. So, it seems as though we may have many “hopes” such as “I hope she makes it home in time for dinner” or “Let’s hope the Phillies win today’s game.”

Stephen Beale wrote in *Catholic Exchange* online: “Without the supernatural, hope becomes something we all want but realize is unattainable. All too often we recognize that natural hope is impractical. Hence the idiom: ‘Don’t get your hopes up.’”

“Hope” appears nearly 100 times in both the Old Testament and the New Testament! The author of the Letter to the Hebrews challenges us: “that we might be strongly encouraged to hold fast to the hope that lies before us. This we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm” (6:18-19).

There are places in our world today where hope seems to be sparse or almost invisible, and other places where it is cherished and lived, such as within the people of Ukraine who are so resilient and hopeful in the pursuit of justice amidst attacks.

We are challenged to participate in creative hope every day on our beautiful campus that mirrors God’s gifts to us. Here at Immaculata we have a cherished history of creative hope among our founding Sisters of IHM. This virtue remains within the charism of the IHM sisters and the Immaculata community today.

We are called to receive the gifts that are all around us, and using a little hope and lots of creativity, not only to deal with irksome issues or huge challenges, but to move forward to a new time with our charism of love, creative hope, and fidelity.

Sincerely, in the Immaculate Heart of Mary,  
Sister Antoine Therese, IHM