



How can I  
make Lent  
different in this  
Jubilee Year?

**O**f the three theological virtues, hope is perhaps the most frequently misunderstood. When we think of hope, we often confuse the theological virtue with its natural counterpart. In everyday terms, we may view hope simply as a positive expectation for a desired outcome. For instance, we might say, “I hope my flight lands on time” or “I hope I get that promotion.” Yet, the Church calls us to something greater: The virtue of theological hope invites us to place our trust fully in Christ and the fulfillment of his promises (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1817).

In times of plenty, hope might be well within reach, but in times of famine, this virtue is often tested. What happens when we find ourselves alone and isolated in a spiritual desert, feeling as though God is silent and distant? Scripture reminds us that hope is most deeply tested in times of trial and uncertainty. As he did with the ancient Israelites, God uses the desert to purify our intentions and desires, helping us build a steadfast trust in his presence and plan.

In Lent, we are called to journey into the spiritual desert of penance, prayer and sacrifice, a time when our hope can be both tested and renewed. Lent invites us to deepen our trust in God so that hope might spring anew, even in the midst of our trials. In this Jubilee Year themed “Pilgrims of Hope,” the Holy Father has called the Church to renew its practice of hope. Lent offers a unique opportunity to live out this hope in concrete ways. It is not enough to “give something up;” we should allow our small prayers and sacrifices to foster a greater trust in God’s plan for our lives.

As pilgrims of hope in this Jubilee Year, here are some practical ways to deepen our relationship with the virtue of hope:

#### **Daily gratitude.**

To grow in the virtue of hope, begin by taking stock of the blessings in your life. Write down a few things each day for which you are grateful, focusing intentionally on the good that God is doing in your life.

#### **Fasting for hope.**

Be intentional about fasting not only from food or material goods, but also from expressions of cynicism, negativity or despair. Refrain from complaints of hopelessness and focus instead on encouragement and gratitude of God’s blessings.

#### **Works of hope.**

Invest time and resources into initiatives that spread hope, such as volunteering at a shelter or food pantry, or organizing an event at your parish to support a charity of your choice.

#### **Visits of hope.**

Ask your parish if it knows of community members who are homebound, sick or suffering and would benefit from a visit. You may also call Catholic Charities at 707-327-0228 to volunteer for Caring Voices.

#### **Words of hope.**

Write a letter each week to someone in your life who is struggling or in despair. Use Scripture or personal testimony to remind them of God’s faithfulness.

As we journey through Lent, let us trust that, through these small acts of hope, God will transform our hearts and lead us toward the fullness of life in Christ.

—Fr. John LoCoco, *Our Sunday Visitor*, March 2025