

Ordinary Time, Summer, 2024

by Rosemarie Pace, Ed.D.

Where do you find hope?

I don't find it; I create it. Hope is an action.

You must create hope together ... by envisioning a better future and by acting to make this future into reality and proving and checking all the time that our actions are effective and making an impact ... so I encourage each one of you—if an individual, organization a family, or whatever is possible, a group—focus on creating hope.

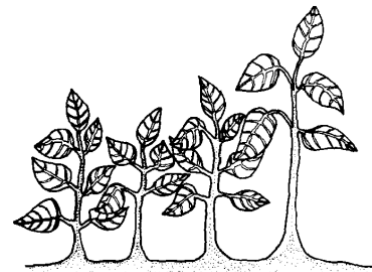
Genocide in Gaza. War in Ukraine. Gang Violence in Haiti. Conflict at the U.S.-Mexico Border. The Threat of Nuclear War. The Global Climate Crisis. Racism. Sexism. Homophobia. Islamophobia. Book Banning. Democracy on Trial. Divisions among not only strangers, but families and friends.

If you believe that even some of these are happening right here and right now, and you oppose them, how do you hold onto hope? *Do you hold onto hope?*

Last December, Christiane Amanpour interviewed Hamze Awawde, a Palestinian Regional Leader of Hands of Peace, and Magen Inon, an Israeli peace activist whose parents were killed by Hamas on October 7th, on CNN. She raised the question above about hope. At a Parents Circle event on May 12th this year, Maoz Inon, Magen's brother, reported on Hamze's answer, also quoted above, which so impressed him.

Having struggled a lot with holding onto hope for many months, if not longer, Hamze's response struck me, as well. "I don't find hope; I create it. Hope is an action." And "You must create hope together." Wow! It got me thinking: What is hope? Where do I see it? Is where I see it an action? Is where I see it happening communally?

Raising the questions that way, I started to recognize many examples of hope, and I think they may be described as actions, usually, if not always, done in community. Why demonstrate, rally, vigil, pray, petition, write, or call, if not for hope? We who are activists to one degree or another do what we do because we still believe that change is possible, that things can be better than they are, that peace and justice are not just idle dreams. Our actions grow out of and sustain hope. And our strength comes from sharing our hopes with others standing and speaking out together. In more mundane ways, why get married, have a baby, move, take on a new job, pursue an education, seek health care, but because of hope. All these actions involve a vision of something promising for the future, an opportunity to create something that may not have existed before or that restores something missing or lost. Why plant a garden, perhaps one of the greatest acts of hope? Oh, to anticipate an abundant harvest!



Hope dies when we stop acting, stop creating, stop collaborating, but as long as we keep going, keep trying, keep envisioning, hope lives on.

The Easter season, a season of God's gifts of life, light, and hope, has ended. Ordinary Time has returned to give us space to take those gifts and live them, to be life, light, and hope for one another. It's a time to contemplate the many ways we can take action together to bring about that better future that we all want and need.

May this Ordinary Time not be a time that the contemporary troubles listed above become so oppressive that we succumb to them, considering them ordinary and unavoidable. Let's instead use this Ordinary Time to transform our contemplation into action, our despair into hope. Let our creative, communal hope become the new ordinary.

Prayer: “Strengthen Us to Answer with Brave Hearts” excerpted from *My Heart in My Mouth: Prayers for Our Lives* by Ted Loder

God of grace, strengthen us to answer with brave hearts your call to help shape a world not of death and oppression but of life and hope.

God of power, strengthen us to help shape a country where our children will be free of the burdens of racism and sexism, fear and exploitation, violence and indifference, greed and pollution...

God of mercy, strengthen us to help shape a nation where diversity is a source of enrichment, compassion is common, life's poetry realized, suffering lightened through sharing, justice attended, joy pervasive, hope lived, the hum of the universe heard, and together with you and with each other we build what is beautiful, true, and worthy of your generosity to us, an echo of your kin-dom.

With the passion of the prophets, and in the insistent spirit of Jesus, we say, Amen and Amen.

Suggested Actions

Watch the inspiring videos of Christiane Amanpour's interview with Hamze Awawde and Magen Inon on CNN (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpFdDZhtk08>) and the Parents Circle's *Voices of Grief: Stories of Resilience & Reconciliation* at (https://parentscirclefriends.org/postmemorial/?mc_cid=cd4fd4cbce&mc_eid=ef88efb55b).

Think of ways you are already helping to create hope. Commit to continuing them. Or identify ways you can start helping to create hope. Commit to doing at least one of them.

Reach out to others to engage them in creating hope, especially to those who feel that they have lost hope. Help those who are trying to find hope to realize that hope is not something to find, but something we can create with others. Then, invite them to join you in doing just that.

Visit the Pax Christi websites for more ways to help create hope: www.paxchristinys.org and www.nypaxchristi.org. Also follow us on social media.