

Be a ray of hope amid uncertainty and turmoil

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Hope, as one of the most important human needs, is much too often dashed by unmet or unrealistic expectations.

When hope takes the form of wishful thinking, where we merely try our best to imagine a better future without connecting it to a realistic pathway or outcome, this kind of hope always disappoints.

Solomon summarised the essential human dilemma well in Proverbs 13 verse 12: “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life”.

As citizens of this metro and of this nation, we live in the daily reality of trying to cope with unmet political and social promises and expectations.

We live yo-yo like lives which fluctuate between the ups of expectation and the lows of disappointment, between the hope of improved equality and employment for all and the life-sapping disillusionment of a persistent status quo.

When a sub-standard education system, an unpredictable viral epidemic and a sudden outburst of rioting, death and destruction are added to the mix, the hope of the ideal Rainbow Nation seems to keep slipping through our fingers.

And yet, in the midst of disillusionment and unmet expectations, positive rays of hope have a way of consistently breaking through the dark and depressing clouds.

In the midst of political and health related corruption we are seeing promising signs of justice being meted out against perpetrators by the National Prosecuting Agency and the Special Investigation Unit, with resultant confiscating of illegally gained property and freezing of illicit funds.

In the midst and aftermath of the dark days of looting, we were infused with hope when citizens of all cultures and languages willingly joined hearts and hands to stand together to protect lives and property and to clean and repair damaged streets, sidewalks, and shopping centres.

This hope was rooted, not in mere talk, but in the practical demonstration of concern and kindness by ordinary citizens who boldly stepped into the gap, taking personal responsibility to care for and serve others in their communities.

Throughout the pandemic and the looting, churches and public benefit organisations gathered and distributed resources, coming to the aid of the poor and underprivileged on a scale never seen before.

Admittedly, we still have a long way to go, but let's take hope in the undeniable fact that we have come a long way together already.

May each of us take hope in the realisation that I am not fighting this battle alone but that I am in fact my brother's keeper and hopefully, he will be mine too.

However encouraging and important these rays of hope might be for us as a nation, there is another kind of hope, a hope that is certain, that rises above circumstance, above the persistent failure of wishful thinking or human promises.

This ultimate hope can only be brought to the human heart by Christ.

This hope is eternal, as explained by the Apostle Paul at the end of his famous chapter on the nature of true and unconditional love in 1 Corinthians 13: "Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love."

This hope is anchored by faith in God and does not belong in the realm of mere theory or wishful thinking.

It is practically expressed by loving and serving God and by loving and serving others in the same manner that God served and loved us through Christ.

This is the eternal message of hope entrusted by Christ to His church to be both proclaimed and demonstrated as He explains in Matthew 5:16: "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

As citizens of this metro, may we never allow the dark clouds of unmet expectations to immobilize us.

Let's rather join hearts and hands to love and serve one another even more earnestly, actively, and practically.

By all means let's be inspired by every ray of hope that we do encounter along the way, but may all our hopes ultimately be anchored in the eternal and lasting hope that only Christ can bring.

The church of Jesus Christ is present in this metro to make a daily difference by loving and serving others with the ultimate aim of revealing Christ, the eternal hope of all nations.

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