

Rector's Address 2019

Hope in the Heart of Christ

May Jesus Christ be praised.

100 years ago, the Diocese of Detroit opened the doors of its seminary dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was not the first attempt to start a seminary. Several attempts were made decades earlier, but finally by God's providence in the Fall of 1919, Sacred Heart Seminary welcomed its first students. It was by no means an easy undertaking and in the process there were seemingly insurmountable obstacles, such as economic challenges, harsh discrimination, and a world war. But in the midst of it all, there was an unshakable hope. Then, just as now, the Lord prompted the members of Sacred Heart to step into the boat with him. To not be afraid. To put out into the deep. To leave fear, pride, and self-sufficiency on the shore, and surrender all to his will. Then, just as now, the Lord calls a group a people with incredible talents, strong convictions, and also human weaknesses, to take up this incredible mission of seminary formation. As exhilarating as it is, there can always be some anxiety, even fear at times, because we don't know what awaits us. But we do not make this journey as those without hope. We do not celebrate 100 years without acknowledging that it is Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who has sustained us along the way. We do not face the challenges ahead with our heads in the sand but rather with eyes fixed on Jesus.

With that in mind, I would like to begin with a brief passage from the Gospel of Matthew to set the context for this address.

Matthew 8: 23-27

He got into a boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves; but he was asleep. They came and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" He said to them, "Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?" Then he got up, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm. The men were amazed and said, "What sort of man is this, whom even the winds and the sea obey?"

They got into the boat and proceeded to the other side. It is remarkable, at least to me, that these disciples get into the boat without even a question about where they are going, or what they will do. Nothing. Just a simple action and a response. In his commentary on this passage, Fr. Simeon Leiva-Merikakis offers these observations from *The Way of the Disciple*: "The general structure of the passage is a movement away from the shore; and secondly the experience of sailing on the lake; and finally landing on the other side." (61) This is clearly a journey. A passage. And Jesus clearly takes a select few with him on this journey, not those who are just curious. He knows the waters will be rough at times, he

knows these disciples will fail him at times and even deny knowing him. He knows their human weaknesses, and yet he invites them to get into the boat.

Obviously, as with the earlier part of the passage, the journey of the disciples in the boat clearly points to leaving the shore behind. Leaving desires, leaving habits, leaving predispositions behind and really embarking on a journey of conversion.

And so there they are, on the boat with Jesus in the middle of the lake. Fr. Simeon continues his observations and writes: "The water symbolizes the danger of the unknown, the threat of the uncertain. In the Old Testament, great monsters symbolic of evil were thought to dwell in the deep waters, so that, as far as the disciples are concerned, they are here sailing right over the heads of evil forces. Jesus is presently staging a deliberate spiritual showdown by exposing the disciples to their own deepest fears." This takes us right through the whole sacrament of baptism. In order to live fully in Christ, we must die with him. We must enter the waters of death in order to rise to new life in Christ. As St. Paul says to the Galatians: "The life I live now is not my own, it is Christ who lives in me." (61-62)

And so in the waters of baptism and the waters of discipleship, our sins must be drowned. We have to cross over. "The crossing of the lake, then symbolizes the deepest possible transformation of the persons involved." (62) They will never be the same. Not just because of their proximity to Jesus, or what they see, but because of the interior transformation. They are truly different. Jesus asks them to move from one spot to another. To cross from one side to the other, over the unknown and dangerous. Over sins and passions. And he asks them to be filled with faith and hope. They don't know exactly where they are going, ...but they do know exactly who they are with, and that makes all the difference.

Then, as they are making the journey, perhaps already uneasy about the unknown, their fears are realized when the storm begins. These storms are not mild and can both damage the boat and destroy it. Storms can come up quickly on the lake, and these men know that all too well. Their fear is well-founded. But here Matthew uses an intriguing word for the violent storm: the Greek word (seismos) literally means 'a great shaking' that is, an earthquake. Their world is literally shaking from the very depths.

As the wind and the waves begin to arrive, the disciples in the boat try their best to manage the situation themselves, and Jesus sleeps. "Regardless of how harassed and perturbed we might be by all life's crises, why can we not, like Jesus, have our soul at rest, anchored in God's good pleasure? This is the rest that Jesus wants us to partake of, the rest that comes from having taken up obedience and filial love toward the Father as our primary occupation. If we only knew how possible this is! If we admit Christ into the boat of our life for him to sail with us, even the most tormented moments at the surface of the emotions can coexist with a deep calm, the deep sleep of the will that rests, like Jesus, in the bosom of the Eternal Father." (67)

But "once the disciples run out of every possible personal resource of strength and understanding, once mortal fear has washed their eyes clean, then and only then does the Lord work the marvel; by a mere word, he calms the winds and the sea." (69)

Fr. Simeon concludes: “We have here an obvious instance of the Word being a scalpel that intervenes in our sick being so as to heal it. Jesus is probing the souls of his disciples in order to ascertain to what point fear and distrust need to be excised so that joy and trust in him and in his Father can begin to grow.” (66)

“The result of this whole episode is that the disciples begin to understand that the waves cannot drown those who are born – not by their own will and understanding – but by the Spirit of God, ..because the spirit lends wings to the soul while our own devices are burdens that make us sink. And even though they already know Jesus in many respects, the crisis on the lake forces them to ask themselves what is perhaps the most important question we, too, could ever ask ourselves: ‘Who is this man, that even the winds and the sea obey him?’” (70)

Spe Salvi

As we embark on the exciting journey of this centennial year, and another year of profound grace in forming our students and preparing them for a life of joyful ministry, this passage from the Gospel of Matthew calls to mind an encyclical letter by Pope emeritus Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*. It is without question that the Lord has called each of us to get into the boat with him. He asks us to step away from the security of the shore and to face honestly our own sinfulness. He asks us to depend on him in a very direct way, and we do that with an unshakable hope that what he has called us to do he will give us the grace and strength to accomplish. And in that light, the virtue of hope guides us through challenging times, allows us to press into his Heart with gratitude, and keeps our eyes fixed on the one whose mercy and love brings new life.

In presenting *Spe Salvi* to the universal church in 2007, Pope emeritus Benedict XVI was certainly a prophetic voice and his words in that encyclical resonate powerfully today, especially for us here at Sacred Heart Major Seminary. The pope began *Spe Salvi* noting that “redemption is offered to us in the sense that we have been given hope, trustworthy hope, by virtue of which we can face our present: the present, even if arduous, can be lived and accepted if it leads toward a goal.” (1) The goal, obviously, is eternal life won for us through the victory of Jesus on the cross and by his resurrection. From that mystery, then, the pope reminds us that we receive the Gospel not simply as something ‘informative’ but rather as ‘performative.’ That means “the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known - it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who has hope has been granted the gift of a new life.” (2)

Pope emeritus Benedict XVI, then, links hope very tightly with faith, and even notes that “faith is the substance of hope.” (10) Hope moves us with confidence on a daily basis toward a person, toward Jesus Christ. Unlike the common or secular use of the word which disfigures the virtue of hope, taking from it the solid foundation in reason and reducing it to a shallow emotion, a self-referential, self-determined dream about which we may only have a tenuous confidence, Christian hope rests solidly on that which the Lord has ensured us we can know, that which we can be certain that he has given to us, eternal life. A culture that loses sight of eternal life, a culture that no longer believes in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, or a culture that displaces God in favor of ego-centrism and the exaltation of athletes, entertainers, and politicians, is a culture that has lost hope. For that reason, the waves of our culture may

surprise us at times, the waves of the church crisis may shake us at times, and the waves of our own sinfulness may discourage us at times, but the virtue of hope allows us to see and move confidently toward that to which we are called, eternal life.

As a prophetic encyclical, *Spe Salvi* speaks to us directly today and offers profound encouragement. The pope's words remind us that when we live with our eyes fixed only on this world, or live only from the position that the one with the most power has the most influence, or from inordinate fear, we begin to live with a lack of trust, we begin to turn away from the mystery of a loving God and turn rather toward ourselves. And then there are so many things that can extinguish our hope. It can be an easy and a seemingly justified turn at first. As hope gets eroded, we may begin to have thoughts like: 'I don't see the change I think needs to happen.' 'Our leadership has disappointed us.' 'The failures of so many are overwhelming, it's paralyzing.' 'Why even try?' And as these thoughts creep in, the evil one tempts us to believe that God is not here, God does not care, and in fact, God does not even exist, and there is no eternal life. So there is no solution other than you. There is no hope. Such are the words and work of the evil one, and we need to call them out.

Prayer as a school of hope

But once again, the words of Pope emeritus Benedict XVI are so prophetic. How can we, as a seminary community, seek to grow in hope? "A first essential setting for learning hope is prayer." (32) It's a simple statement, but one that rings like a large bell and echoes through the countryside. He goes on to consider St. Augustine's homily on the first letter of St. John and the relationship between prayer and hope. He says: "Man was created for greatness - for God himself; he was created to be filled by God. But his heart is too small for the greatness to which it is destined. It must be stretched. 'By delaying his gift, God strengthens our desire; through desire he enlarges our soul and by expanding it he increases its capacity for receiving him.'" Finally, the pope uses St. Augustine's image of hope and the human heart. "Suppose that God wishes to fill you with honey [a symbol of God's tenderness and goodness]; but if you are full of vinegar, where will you put the honey? The vessel, that is your heart, must first be enlarged and then cleansed, freed from the vinegar and its taste. This requires hard work and is painful, but in this way alone do we become suited to that for which we are destined." (33) And that end, that destiny, is eternal life.

Conclusion

The passage from the Gospel of Matthew and the prophetic words of Pope emeritus Benedict XVI in *Spe Salvi* move us to consider the richness of what it means to be a people of hope. We are those invited by Jesus into the boat, and we are on a very real journey. We are, in the traditional sense, *status viatoris*, or in the state of 'being on the way', not there yet, but confidently on the way. But this 'being on the way', this hope, is not one in which we are left alone or isolated. Jesus accompanies us, he abides with us, he calms us, so long as we don't let our anxiety, inordinate fear, or lack of trust pull us away from the one who is our ultimate desire. With that in mind, we can certainly commit ourselves to prayer, prayer as the school of hope.

Looking Forward: Institutional Initiatives

Centennial

As I noted at the beginning, this fall marks the 100th anniversary of the first semester of Sacred Heart. At the Archbishop's Gala back in June, we highlighted the theme of 'God's Divine Providence.' In that context we acknowledged how it is that only through God's providence, only through his grace can we accomplish the mission that has been entrusted to us. We don't take it for ourselves. We don't control it. We pause this year and contemplate what great marvels the Lord has done. We throw ourselves into it and ask God to use us as his instruments, so that his light might shine brighter.

And so in the context of God's divine providence, and through the virtue of hope that strengthens us for the journey, we offer thanks to God for all that has been accomplished here at the seminary and all that will be accomplished in the years to come. Our centennial year will be marked by a number of events, a year of prayer and thanksgiving. It will begin in September with a votive Mass of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. A time for the seminary community to pray intensely in a spirit of thanksgiving and also a spirit of petition, asking the Lord to purify us, to strengthen us, to give us zeal, wisdom, and joy. In October we will host an academic conference that will explore the theological and philosophical foundations of the New Evangelization. December will be marked by an exciting concert that will include combined choirs from Sacred Heart and the Archdiocese of Detroit. As we seek to engage the wider community and also celebrate with them, we will have a spring picnic for the neighborhood, our local churches, and those who are near to us. It will be a time to relax and enjoy the gifts of the community that surrounds us. And the centennial year will conclude with the Archbishop's Gala in June. In the end, these events will be wonderful opportunities for us to give thanks, to be renewed, and to celebrate.

Seminarian Evaluation

There are two important additions to the seminary's Institutional Strategic Plan for 2019-2024. Having listened carefully to the faculty in recent months and also in light of our attentiveness ongoing improvement of our programs, we see the need to address two issues as they relate to seminarian formation and evaluation, two good opportunities to strengthen our teaching and also the way in which we evaluate the seminarians. The first is a better integration of the four dimensions in teaching, and specifically the spiritual dimension with the intellectual dimension. Second is the manner in which the faculty members are engaged in the process of the annual evaluation of the seminarians.

- a. *Integration:* In the new strategic plan, goal 4.8 states: "Enhance faculty integration into additional dimensions of seminarian formation." This goal seeks to explore the ways in which our teaching (intellectual) is connected to the other dimensions of formation (spiritual, pastoral, and human). Fr. Laboe along with Fr. Burr will explore the unique nature of a seminary faculty, that is, how it is not simply a college or university, but a truly integrated community of formation. In the coming months we will begin to explore how that integration might be improved.

- b. *Evaluation*: In the new strategic plan, goal 5.6 states: "Increase faculty engagement in the evaluation process of the seminarians." Prior to the Apostolic Visitation, full time faculty had a direct vote on the advancement of candidates to Holy Orders. Among the recommendations that came from the visitation was the restriction of the vote for advancement to the formation team. At that time, we sought ways to keep the faculty engaged in the process. We continue to explore what might be most effective within the range that the ecclesial norms permit. Thus, this goal will seek to explore the process of evaluation as well as any specific issues that need extra attention. I am grateful to Fr. Burr for the work he has already done on this and look forward to new ways to improve evaluations.

Boundaries and Reporting: Also, during the fall semester last year it became clear that while we have policies related to faculty conduct, as well as a robust section on sexual harassment, we do not have any specific language that relates concretely to appropriate boundaries for faculty (resident priest and lay) and students. Further, the *Motu Proprio* signed by Pope Francis, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, includes norms for reporting that need to be integrated into our policies. During the May faculty meetings, the language for a policy was reviewed and we look forward to approving more clearly stated principles of appropriate boundaries and reporting which can be added as supplemental policy for the *Faculty Handbook*. The policy needs to articulate clearly the unique nature of an evaluative environment like a seminary and what constitutes appropriate boundaries so that both students and faculty have a common understanding.

Racism/Violence

It is with deep sadness that we have witnessed an increasing number of violent acts, particularly mass shootings, throughout our country. But these mass shootings are not the only forms of violence that we are witnessing. The mass shootings, along with a simmering anger that seems to make its way into public discourse more frequently, targets groups based on race and ethnicity. Racist language that directly dehumanizes and strips from individuals and groups their dignity is not only sinful but creates a climate that is opposed to the Gospel of Life.

In addition, we can also see an increase in violence against our brothers and sisters, particularly in the African American and Hispanic communities, a violence that often begins with just a thought, but then moves to words, and finally to action. With new forms of communication, one being social media, the frequency of threats and racist language being spread is increasing.

Last fall, the bishops of the United States approved a document that, unfortunately, did not receive much attention in light of the enormity of the sexual abuse crisis. The bishops approved *Open Wide Our Hearts, The Enduring Call to Love. A Pastoral Letter Against Racism*. In that letter the bishops note: "Although our nation has moved forward in a number of ways against racial discrimination, we have lost ground in others. Despite significant progress in civil law with regard to racism, societal realities indicate a need for further catechesis to facilitate conversion of hearts." They go on to remind us that "conversion is an essential aspect of evangelization. Therefore, we must never limit our understanding of God's power to bring about the conversion of even those whose hearts appear completely frozen by the sin of racism. Our communities must never cease to invite and encourage them in love to abandon these sinful thoughts and destructive ways."

Deeply immersed in the virtue of hope, then, I ask that we as a seminary community spend time with the pastoral letter this year. The formation leadership team will seek ways to weave this important topic into our programming for the seminarians, and I ask that the faculty and Staff Engagement Committee also spend time collectively with this document so that we can have fruitful conversations, recognize where we need conversion, and thrive as a community deeply committed to respecting the dignity of each person. It is my deep desire that we never become complacent as a community, that we always seek ways to grow in charity, grow in humility, grow in deep respect for one another, and never hesitate to call out sin so that we can grow as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Prayer: First Fridays

As we embark on a new year, with so many initiatives and also open the doors in gratitude for 100 years of God's providence, we also have an opportunity to consider new ways in which we can pray together as a community and be renewed in our call to holiness. I noted that Pope emeritus Benedict XVI referred to prayer as a "school of Hope." As we seek to grow in hope, and also to grow in holiness, common prayer is one of the means through which we accomplish that, which leads me to think of the Sacred Heart and First Fridays.

Over the summer as we celebrated the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I noted the encyclical letter by Pius XI, *Caritate Christi Compulsi*. At a time of great difficulty and despair in the world and in the Church, the Holy Father then drew our attention to the mystery of the Sacred Heart. His words resonate significantly for us today, especially when he notes that "our unshaken hope in this complete victory of God and of the Church receives daily confirmation (such is the infinite mercy of God!) from the noble ardor of innumerable souls whom we see turning themselves to God, in every country and in all classes of society. For most certainly a very powerful afflatus of the Holy Spirit is rushing through all lands, and is moving the hearts, especially the young, to mount upwards to the highest summits of Christian law, and raising them above vain observance of men, makes them ready to undertake even the most arduous tasks."

Pope Pius XI goes on in the encyclical to offer a reflection on the importance of a deep devotion to the Sacred Heart and also how prayer and penance form the foundation for the Christian life. He notes sadly that "we deplore the fact that in our day the idea and the name of expiation and penance have with many lost in great part the power of rousing enthusiasm of heart and heroism of sacrifice." Those words almost 90 years ago are even more relevant today. Yet we know that prayer and penance opens an infinite number of doors of grace for us, and are "two potent inspirations sent to us at this time by God, that we may lead back to Him mankind that has gone astray and wanders without a guide." Now, perhaps more than ever, our seminary community, devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, will benefit from a renewed and sustained devotion to his Heart. Now, perhaps more than ever, our journey with the Lord marked by an unshakable hope, can be deepened by common prayer and penance, asking the Lord to purify us, to forgive our sins, to strengthen our bonds of charity, to open wide our hearts with greater hospitality and generosity.

In order to do so, then, I encourage our whole community to join in prayer, the first Friday of every month. The prayers will be offered in the main chapel immediately following the 12:05 Mass. The prayers will include the Litany of the Sacred Heart, prayers of consecration to the Sacred Heart, and a decade of the rosary. The prayers will conclude by 1:00pm. These

opportunities of monthly prayer and penance, which will be included in the institutional calendar, are offered in reparation for sin in the Church, in our seminary, in our own hearts, for an increase in holiness, and in gratitude for God's mercy. Again, I encourage each of you to participate in this prayer together, a prayer rooted in hope. And if you cannot participate here at the seminary, perhaps you could pause at some point on the first Friday of every month and offer personal prayers in reparation for sin and for the seminary community. I am confident that God will bless us abundantly through these sincere prayers and acts of penance.

Institutional Updates

In this final section of my address, I want to give some brief institutional updates as we make our way into a new year.

Institute for Lay Witness in the World

A part of our strategic plan, and in alignment with the Archbishop's pastoral letter, we continue to develop the concept and structure for a new Institute for Lay Witness in the World. The administrative council has been looking at this carefully and, with the leadership of Dr. Gerlach, conducted interviews and focus groups last year to provide important data and engage the community. We are now at a point where we are beginning to look at a structure. We are keeping in mind three critical areas for success: Mission, Governance, and Finance. I am excited about the work that has been done and look forward to the next steps.

MOOC/Online Programming

Also as an integral part of our strategic plan to expand our outreach, we launched our first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) this year. The first pilot during the season of Lent, the *Beauty of Belief*, provided us a rich source of data and I am very grateful to Dr. Gresham and Mr. Cahill for the thorough evaluation and report on lessons learned. In the first pilot, we had over 3,000 people register, from 46 states and 38 countries. For almost 60% of the participants, this was their first online experience. And from the surveys that were done after the course, we were very pleased to find that among those for whom this was not their first online course, they expressed a very high level of satisfaction. During the summer we offered a second, shorter MOOC on *The Mission of the Laity*. Many participants in these two open online courses who felt deeply enriched by what they learned have expressed interest in learning more about formal degree programs at the seminary. In fact, we have 29 new students who have come to Sacred Heart through one of our MOOCs. The full report to the Board of Trustees and faculty continues to provide for us exceptional data so that we can move forward effectively and support this initiative as a part of our mission.

Security

Institutional surveys always seek to hear from all of you so that we can listen carefully and respond to the ways in which we can continually improve. We don't want those surveys and the observations to simply disappear. Just last month at a meeting with staff I also had the chance to listen again. Moving into the new year, one area that we want to devote more time for improvement will be security. A campus and building like ours is complex from a security perspective. On the one hand it is a residential community and requires attentiveness to private residential areas. On the other hand it is a campus and thus has an environment that is open to

non-resident students, faculty, and staff. And finally, the building is a center for archdiocesan events throughout the year and includes many guests. Each of these realities requires a different focus for security and based on the observations from the surveys, Mr. Duncan has already had initial meetings so that we can explore ways to keep our building, our campus, all of us, safe.

Enrollment

In April we marked our second consecutive year of a record number of graduates. That is always a wonderful thing to celebrate and I'm grateful for the efforts that go into accompanying our students toward the successful completion of their degrees, diplomas, and certificates. At the same time, that means we need to be even more attentive to recruitment and enrollment. This year, I am very pleased to announce that we have 4 new dioceses that will be represented at Sacred Heart: Hartford, Portland, Gaylord, and Aix-en-Provence. I remain deeply grateful to the bishops who entrust their men to us. This year we begin the year with 117 seminarians. In addition, our lay commuter population continues to remain strong. Even with back to back years of record graduating classes, we expect to begin the year with about 370 for the fall term, including lay commuter students and STL priests.

New Hires

This year we welcome some members to the Sacred Heart Community. The first four we have come to know already, but I have not had the chance to welcome them in my address. David Zanitsch, who is our Director of Institutional Advancement, Jamie Gualdoni, who is our new Marketing Manager, Catherine Tibai who is the administrative assistant in the Department of Institutional Advancement, and Alex Slavsky in the vocations office. In addition, we welcome for the first time Dr. Donald Wallenfang as a member of faculty in the College of Liberal Arts. Dr. Wallenfang brings with him a deep love for the Lord, a desire to participate in the mission of seminary formation, and an exceptional depth of theological knowledge. Most recently he has taught at (Walsh University) in Ohio. His list of publications and teaching experience is impressive and we are very pleased to welcome him.

Conclusion

As I bring to a conclusion the address for this year, I offer words of gratitude to everyone who is here. It is a tremendous blessing to be a part of the seminary community, to work together on the mission entrusted to us. To get into the boat and let the Lord form us as his disciples. Each one of us here brings very special gifts and God uses those to accomplish so much.

Also, as I conclude I cannot but help sense God's providence. In the course of 100 years, Sacred Heart has had its blessings and challenges. But through all these years, God has never ceased to abide with us. At the very heart of our community is the chapel. And the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus has continuously invited us to approach him, day in and day out, for conversion, for healing, for growth in holiness, for consolation, and for the encouragement that allows us to be a people of hope. Let's respond to the invitation of the Lord and get into the boat with him this year. All of us. And let's hear him say: Be not afraid, put out into the deep. I am with you.

Litany of Our Lady of Hope

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy**
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy**
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy**

Our Lady of hope **Light up our way**

Our Lady of the way **Pray for us**

Our Lady of light
Fullness of Israel
Prophecy of the new age
Dawn of the new world
Mother of God
Mother of the liberating Messiah
Mother of the redeemed
Mother of all people
Our Lady of hope
Virgin of silence
Virgin who listens
Virgin who sings
Servant of the Lord
Servant of the Word
Servant of the redemption
Servant of the kingdom
Our Lady of hope **Light up our way**

Disciple of Christ: **Pray for us**

Witness of the gospel
Sister of humanity
Beginning of the Church
Mother of the Church
Model of the Church
Image of the Church
Our Lady of hope
Mary, blessed among women
Mary, dignity of women
Mary, greatness of women
Woman faithful in waiting
Woman faithful in her task
Woman faithful in discipleship
Woman faithful to the cross
Our Lady of hope
First fruit of Easter
Splendor of Pentecost
Star of evangelization
Shining presence
Prayerful presence
Welcoming presence
Active presence

Our Lady of hope ***Light up our way***

Hope of the poor ***Pray for us***

Trust by the humble

Strength of the marginalized

Relief of the oppressed

Defender of the innocent

Courage of the persecuted

Comforter of the exiled

Our Lady of hope ***Light up our way***

Voice of freedom ***Pray for us***

Voice of communion

Voice of peace

Sign of God's maternal aspect

Sign of the Father's nearness

Sign of the Son's mercy

Sign of the Spirit's fruitfulness

Our Lady of hope ***Light up our way***

Christ, Savior of history ***Pray for us***

Christ, Savior of humanity

Christ, Hope of creation

Let us Pray:

Almighty and eternal God, the blessed Virgin Mary,

glorious Mother of your Son, helps and defends all those who call upon her.

By her intercession may we be strong in faith, steady in hope, and persevere in your love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.