

**SECTION 65: SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART:  
A SPIRITUALITY OF HOPE AND JOY**  
*Hans Kwakman msc*

Pope Francis often reminds us that the message of the Gospel is a message of joy for all people. Three of his Apostolic Letters refer to "joy" in their titles: *"The Joy of the Gospel: on the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world"* (November 2013); *"The Joy of Love, on love in the family"* (March 2016); and *"Rejoice and Be Glad: on the call to holiness in today's world"* (March 2018). And his reflections in "Laudato Si" he calls "troubling" on the one hand, but "joyful" on the other (LS 246).

"*Troubling,*" because the Pope is fully aware of the alarming state of the earth today: "*We need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair*" (LS 61). But also "*joyful,*" because there is still hope and, "*hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems*" (LS 61).

The Pope sees the deepest cause of the lack of joy in the fact that "*God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too*" (Evangelii Gaudium 2).

On the other hand, he states that there is reason to keep hoping that humanity at the beginning of the twenty-first century will generously assume its heavy responsibilities (cf. LS 165). After all, "*worldwide, the ecological movement has made significant advances, thanks also to the efforts of many organizations of civil society*" (LS 166).

However, ultimately our hope and joy are founded on the conviction that the Lord of life is always present "*in the heart of this world.*" "*God does not abandon us, for he has united himself definitively to our earth and his love constantly*

*impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him! "* (LS 245).

## REFLECTION

### HOPE

*"Bernard of Clairvaux coined the marvellous expression:*

*"Impassibilis est Deus, sed non incompassibilis"*

*"God cannot suffer, but he can suffer with."*

*Human beings are worth so much to God*

*that He himself became human*

*in order to suffer with humanity in an utterly real way*

*—in flesh and blood—*

*as is revealed to us in the account of Jesus's Passion.*

*Hence in all human suffering we are joined by One*

*who experiences and carries that suffering with us.*

*Hence con-solatio is present in all suffering,*

*the consolation of God's compassionate love—*

*and so the star of hope rises.*

*Certainly, in our many different sufferings and trials*

*we always need the lesser and greater hopes too:*

*a kind visit, the healing of internal and external wounds,*

*a favourable resolution of a crisis, and so on.*

*In our lesser trials these kinds of hope*

*may even be sufficient.*

*But in truly great trials,*

*where I must make a definitive decision to place the truth*

*before my own welfare, career and possessions,*

*I need the certitude of that true, great hope."*

(Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical SPE SALVI, ("In hope we were saved")  
November 2007, n. 39.)