

Lenten Hope

Call to Prayer Leader: *“Abandon yourself to God’s paternal embrace in the hope that He Himself will accomplish in you what He expects of you and will bless whatever you do for Him. Therefore, keep your heart ready to receive peace and joy of the Holy Spirit* (St. Vincent, Coste, volume 5, page 166)

Let us Pray ALL: *“Do we serve God in hope, looking to His promises, confiding in His love, seeking His kingdom and leaving the rest to Him? Rejoice in hope, for hope shall never be confounded.”*

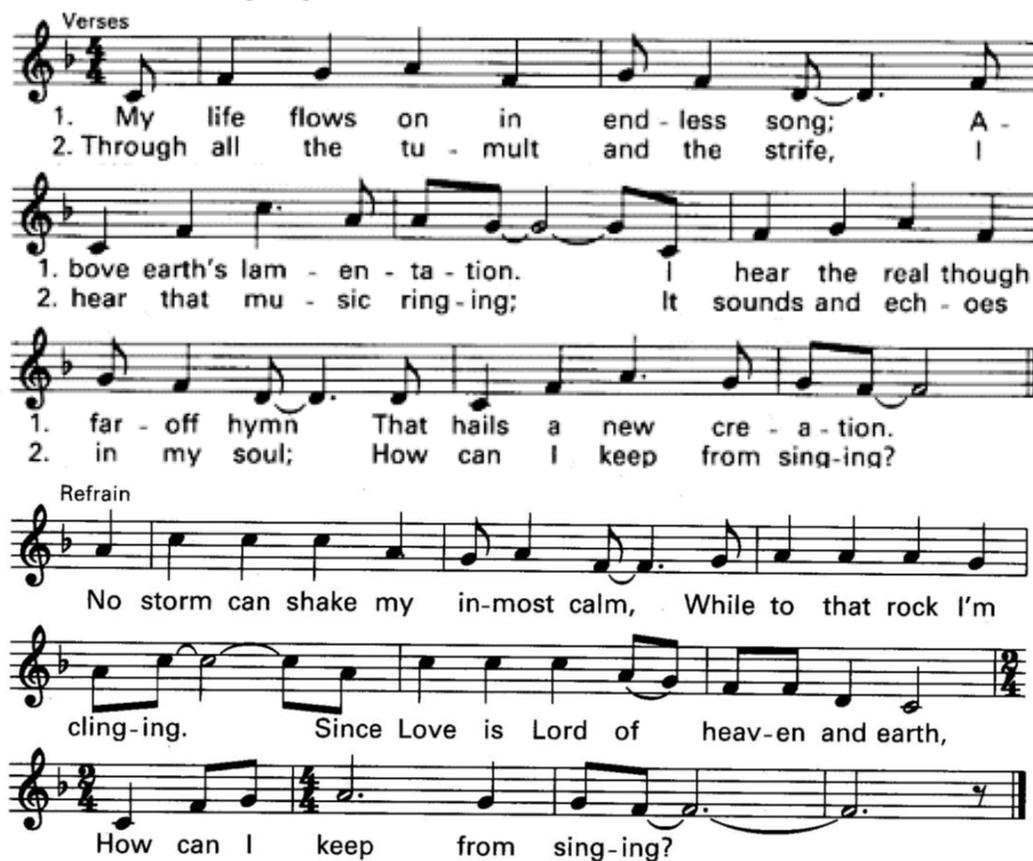
(St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Collected Writings, Volume 3a, page 332)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

Hymn How Can I Keep from Singing Robert Lowry

Hope
CHANGES EVERYTHING

Verses



1. My life flows on in end-less song; A -
2. Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I

1. bove earth's lam - en - ta - tion. I hear the real though
2. hear that mu - sic ring - ing; It sounds and ech - oes

1. far - off hymn That hails a new cre - a - tion.
2. in my soul; How can I keep from sing - ing?

Refrain

No storm can shake my in-most calm, While to that rock I'm
cling - ing. Since Love is Lord of heav - en and earth,
How can I keep from sing - ing?

Text: 87 87 with refrain; attr. to Robert Lowry, 1826–1899, alt.; verse 3, Doris Plenn.
Music: Quaker Hymn; attr. to Robert Lowry.
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Reading Think hope doesn't make a difference? Let's get real for a second. Two people are walking in your direction. One of them is the most encouraging person you know. The other is the most discouraging person you know. Which one do you want to spend time with? Which one will you be? Ray Johnston

Reflection Leader: How do we become people of hope? Becoming a person with hope, defeating discouragement and deepening trust is possible by means of seven factors.

1. *Recharge our batteries.* Nobody does well running on empty.
2. *Raise our expectations.* Life really can be better than anything we've known.
3. *Refocus on the future.* Don't look back; concentrate on what can be.
4. *Play to our strengths.* Be myself; everyone else is already taken.
5. *Refuse to go it alone.* Even Jesus had twelve apostles.
6. *Replace burnout with balance.* Variety refreshes, restores and reenergizes.
7. *Play defense.* Learn to respond to bad news in spirit of opportunity.

When we strive to live these seven factors, genuine hope arises. Hope improves our relationships and our influence, plus a hope-filled person is a lot more fun. Raising our hope level changes everything because we will finally be living with a solid, secure, emotionally-healthy and spiritually-solid foundation.

adapted from Ray Johnston <http://hopequotient.com/blog/how-do-you-become-a-person-of-hope/#more-42>

Pause. Think and Share How hopeful am I?

How can I deepen my hope this Lent?



Response ALL: *"God be praised, ... He is the sole foundation of [our] hope."*

(St. Vincent, Coste, volume 8, page 329)

Closing Prayer ALL: Dear God, in this season of Lent, we're reminded of our own difficulties and struggles. Sometimes the way seems dark. Sometimes we feel like our lives have been marked by only grief and pain. We don't see how our circumstances can ever change. Yet, today, amid our weaknesses, we place our hope in you. O God, rise up within us; let your Spirit shine out of every broken place. Allow your power to be manifest through our limitations so that others will recognize it is You who is at work within us. We ask you to trade the ashes of our lives for the beauty of your Presence. We choose to give you thanks today and to place our hope in you. You are with us through whatever we face. We praise you, for you make all things new in Jesus through your Spirit. Amen.

adapted from Debbie McDaniel <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/prayer/prayers-for-lent.html>

Blessing Leader: O God, grant us your blessing that our Lenten efforts to live in hope may open us to deeper trust in you as we serve our brothers and sisters who are in need. Grace us as we strive to share our gifts with joy and compassion, openness and receptivity, in Jesus' name through your Spirit.

ALL: Amen.