



I was admittedly apprehensive the first time. We both were. Donna eased the tension by remarking: “Don’t worry, you’re married to brilliance!” I laughed and relaxed, knowing she was right.

There was a sharp click by my ear and I was enjoying my first at-home haircut. Now this might not be a cause for drama in many households, but I was a child of the seventies. One’s hair was not a trivial concern. We went to professionals who were trained in the latest styles. My formerly blonde locks were feathered back to perfection. Fortunately, vanity wanes over the years and I always knew I could trust Donna to do her best for me.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church encourages a similar trust as it relates to the theological virtue of hope: “Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit” (1817).

A marriage where a husband and wife practice this trust is a living catechism which can be read by all who see them. All of us as individuals can offer others hope. A sacramental marriage, though, is a particularly powerful influence on society. This is why it is under such unremitting attack.

Marriage is a “Witness to Hope.” This was the title of George Weigel’s biography of Pope St. John Paul the Great. Karol Wojtyła lived through a dark age of oppression and harassment particularly towards people of faith. His trust in something greater than a secular state was a threat to the connected and powerful. Miracles occurred as a result of this trust. Trust can still work miracles.

John Paul often called the family “the Church in miniature.” To understand history as a battle with Powers and Principalities is to understand the attacks on marriage and family. Every generation in the church militant fights this battle anew. God has not left us defenseless. He has supplied us with the necessary equipment to fight and win this battle. The Catechism adds this: “The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man...it keeps

man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude..." (1818).

Donna and I were sitting on the patio enjoying what we called our tan treats. We had a plate of cheese, crackers, and pineapple which were all of a similar pale hue. Our dog understood that he was an integral part of the feast and came over to share a few chunks of his favorite cheese. Donna gave him a couple pieces which he readily ate. Then, I saw Donna smirk like someone does when that little voice on your left shoulder whispers in your ear. She took a piece of pineapple and gave it to our poor unsuspecting dog. His reaction changed from hopeful anticipation to confusion, disgust, and then disbelief. Jack is a forgiving soul, so all is well between him and Donna now. However, for a couple days after the unfortunate pineapple incident, Jack would carefully sniff and inspect anything Donna held out to him.

We may get something sour when we were expecting something savory, but it is not because God is untrustworthy. It is because the world is fallen and our senses are dulled. We don't have an appreciation for the finer things. This is when we have to trust our Creator and hope that one day our sense will be restored. Trusting God is sometimes difficult in a culture which imagines itself to be at the pinnacle of civilization and, yet, can do something so uncivilized as to allow the trafficking in the tiny body parts of its slaughtered children.

One of my spiritual fathers, Fr. Benedict Groeschel, had this to say in his book *Arise from Darkness*: "When things fall apart and all seems ruined, and when the terrible question 'What do you do when nothing makes sense?' comes right home, the answer is that it is time to believe. It is time for faith...One must grab onto God...One must be able to say, 'I believe that God's goodness is going to bring about some greater good by this horror. It may not be a great good for me in this world, but it will be a great good someplace, somewhere...'"

A married couple can practice trust and can be a channel of hope to their own little corner of the world. I'm just glad I trusted Donna to cut my hair before she revealed her mischievous side in the great pineapple incident.