

WOMEN OF HOPE

“Hope is a thing with feathers”

“It is the companion of power, and mother of success; for who so hopes strongly has within her/him the gift of miracles.” Samuel Smiles



We may never know how God calls us to be the change that God wishes to see in the world, neither may we know the difference we can make in someone's life, just by living out our call in the best possible way. When we look at the history of our Salvation, we see how Mary, our Blessed Mother, is an inspiration for each of us to be women

of Hope. She had the singular and greatest privilege of bringing forth Jesus - the Son God - into this world, and yet, she lived a very ordinary and simple life just like any other woman of her time. She had to face harsh and fierce realities in her life however, her response to God was profound and her surrender was total. This enabled her to trust in God in the darkest hours of her life. Therefore, she remains as an inspiration and a model for all, to be people of hope, believing that God is in control of everything and that every cloud has a silver lining.

We, too, reflect on the life of Mother Bernarda as a woman of hope. As young people, we felt or experienced a call to trust in the Lord as our source of hope. We see Mother Bernarda as our role model because her life was characterized by hope.



HOPE

Hope is seeing the light in spite of being surrounded by darkness. We attribute these words to our beloved Mother Bernarda, who never gave up but kept on moving through her most painful situations like a strong-willed bird that lives

within the human soul and sings its song no matter what, writes the poet Emily Dickinson in his poem **“Hope is the thing with Feathers.”**¹



We see in her the spirit of a hopeful person, especially when talking to her sisters about Fr. Theodosius whilst encouraging them to trust in Divine Providence. Through her life, we have learned to look to the cross, to the ultimate sacrifice, the true source of hope. *She chose the cross, she bore the cross, she loved the cross* and venerated it as the source of her hope and strength. As women

of hope, we are touched by her life and wish to follow in her footsteps - thus our call in this secularized world is to be a transforming presence.

We live in a society where children, women and others who are less fortunate by the circumstances of life, are abused. They have lost hope and trust in humanity and in God. It is our mission, as young religious, to console and encourage those victimized, to surrender their lives to God. When people see us it's like they are encountering God himself. Day by day they are regaining the hope lost by the challenges of life. It is the Hope of the Risen Christ which urges us to continue the Mission of the Church entrusted to the congregation. We are humbled by our little deeds which makes a difference in our societies.

Indeed, Mother Bernarda lived this virtue of hope in spite of the ups and downs in her life and so she was able to say, “Yes certainly, God has helped us till now and will continue to help us.”

The virtue of hope made Mother Bernarda to leave behind footprints of her exemplary life for each one of us to follow, as we too are called to give hope to the hopeless, love to the unloved, comfort to the unwanted and abandoned and to those who live in a materialistic and consumerist society.

Presented by Sisters Martha Woods Zambia, Mary Bhavani Central India, Mary Shai Lesotho, Eney Mungwini Southern Africa and Rosy Anitha South India.



¹ (written around 1861) is a popular poem by the American poet Emily Dickinson.