



Promoting Hope: Your Journey to Wellness



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What is Self Care?

- Any activity we **deliberately** do to take care of our spiritual, mental, physical and emotional health.
- A simple concept in theory, but often overlooked.
- Good self care is **key** to improved mood, reduced anxiety and to a good relationship with yourself and others.
- “Something that refuels us, rather than takes from us.”
- Self care is key to living a balanced life the Lord called you to.





*It is important to
note that the way
we **perceive** and
manage stress
matters a great
deal.*



Reality for Clergy

- Not permitted to have a bad day
- Always have to be upbeat and positive
- Not affected by stressful situations
- Say No?...No way!
- Recognizing expectations
- Managing expectations



Living Healthy in mind,
body, and spirit leads to
Wellness



Principles of Wellness



- Balanced Diet & Fluid Intake
- Physical Activity
- Proper Rest
- Routine Visits to your physician
- Reduction of Alcohol & Tobacco
- **Spiritual well-being**
- **Psychological well-being**
- **Social Connectedness**



Wellness

The state of being in good health, especially as an actively pursued goal.

An active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a healthful and fulfilling life.

Not just free of illness but a dynamic process of change & growth.





Pope Francis has simple, life-changing messages for hope:

“God's love can grace each of us with a lasting and sustaining hope, no matter how dark or confusing our situation.”

“Life is often a desert, it is difficult to walk, but if we trust in God, it can become beautiful and wide as a highway. Never lose hope; continue to believe, always, in spite of everything. Hope opens new horizons, making us capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable.”



Defining Hope in Crisis

No universal definition, but common themes arise

A starting point for the process of recovery from crisis

Hope is freeing

Belief and expectation things in the future will be better

Instrumental in spiritual healing

Hope is solid, not vacillating – something positive will happen

Hope instills positivity and openness

Hope is not a wish or wishful thinking, it is rooted in desire



Suggestions for Supporting and Building Hope

- Keep trying and don't give up – practice resilience
- Exercise gratitude – stay aware of what you do have and be grateful for those things
- Challenge your inner dialogue – if you find yourself saying negative statements, become aware of them and change
- Be nicer to yourself
- Let ideals of how things “should be going” go
- Celebrate your accomplishments
- Stay mindfully aware of how you are affecting those around you
- Take a walk, experience nature – see God's beauty
- Become excited about what the future has to offer
- Remind yourself that you are still alive, and you are okay



Four Core Beliefs Found in Hopeful People

- The future will be better than the present.
- I have the power to make it so.
- There are many paths to my goals.
- None of them are free of obstacles.



Here are some simple steps for beginning to think about the sources of hope in your life:

- Try and think of a time when you felt that a greater power than yourself existed, in a positive way. Maybe you were looking out at the ocean or up at the stars; maybe you were listening to a piece of music or looking at a painting. Think about how you can re-connect with that feeling.
- Who are the people in your life who really care about you and have your best interests at heart? What are some steps you can take to begin repairing or improving your relationships with those people?
- What are some things that upset you? Think about whether these things are in or out of your control. If there are things that are outside your control, what can you do to “let go”?
- If, somehow you woke up this morning and suddenly you were your “best self,” who would you be? What would be different about your life? What are some small steps that you can take right now to move closer to your best self?



Priests and Deacons create a community of HOPE through the connection within the parish...

- Know that your parishioners are suffering
- Gateway to the next phase in time
- Healing through prayer
- Built in support systems
- Non-judgmental setting
- Celebrating Mass virtually
- Hope through the Sacraments
 - Reassuring parishioners they will return



How to help people find Hope

Sharing stories of Hope

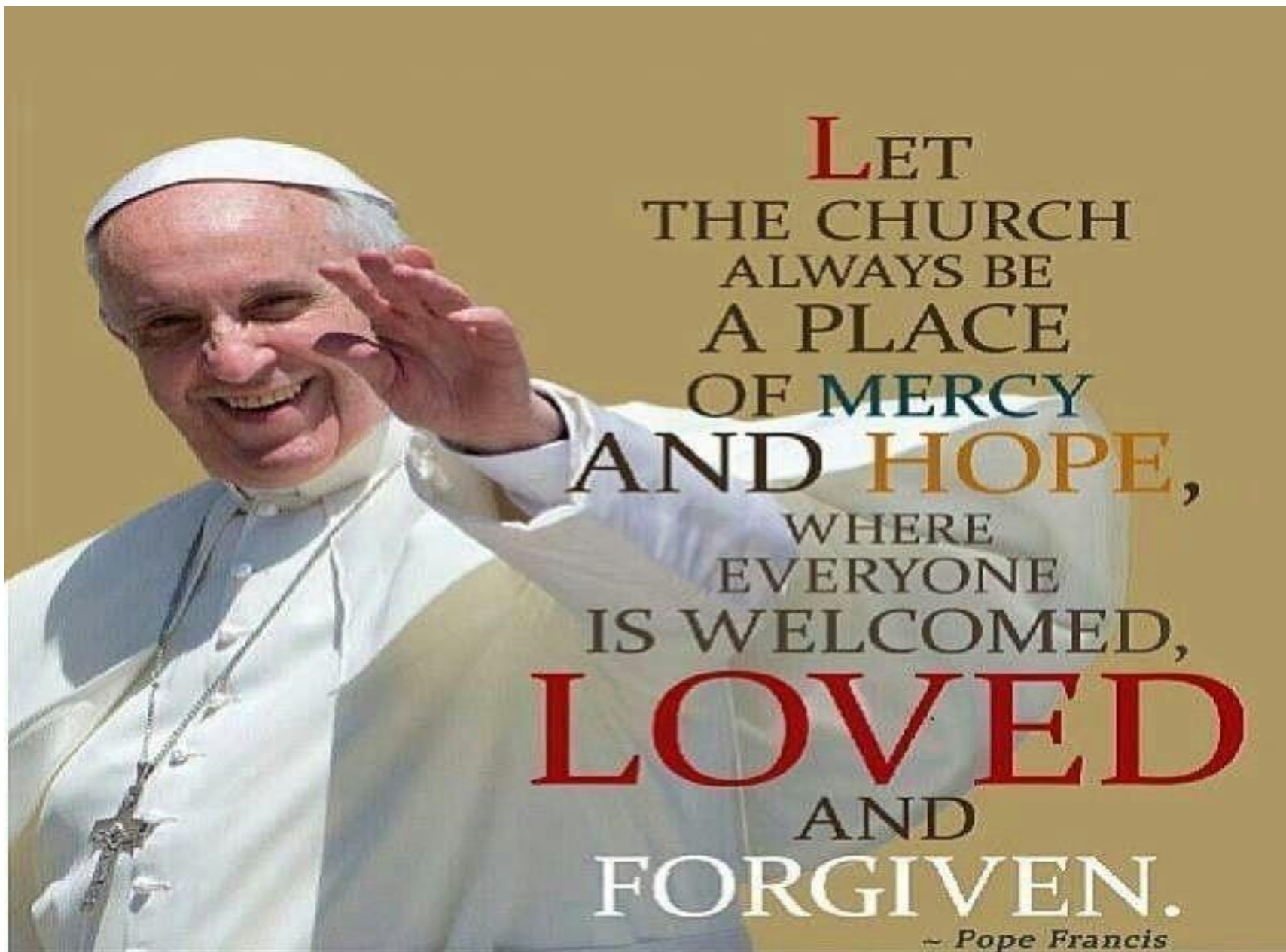
Promoting Acceptance

Think of the Future

Positive Affirmations

Encourage Connections

Embracing a Realistic and Meaningful Plan for the Future



LET
THE CHURCH
ALWAYS BE
A PLACE
OF MERCY
AND HOPE,
WHERE
EVERYONE
IS WELCOMED,
LOVED
AND
FORGIVEN.

~ Pope Francis



OPTIMISM 101

Pessimists:

Tend to believe bad events will last a long time, undermine everything they do, and are their own fault.

Optimists:

Confronted with the same hard knocks think about misfortune in the opposite way.

They tend to believe defeat is just a temporary setback, that its causes are confined to this one case.

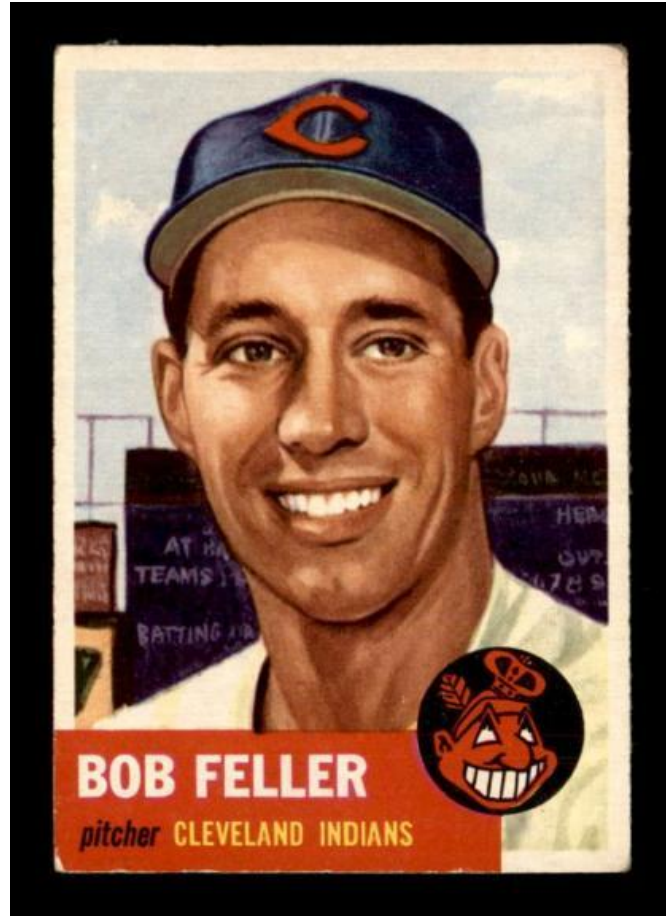
They believe defeat is not their fault: circumstances, bad luck, or something external brought it about.

Such people are unfazed by defeat.

Confronted by a bad situation, they perceive it as a challenge and try harder.



Baseball Cards: SMILES PREDICT LONGEVITY





Smiling Baseball Players and Longevity Study

250 Baseball Cards

SMILING: 79.9 YEARS

NOT SMILING: 72.9 YEARS

Wayne State University (2010)



“A positive outlook on life may not only help you live longer and prevent you from having a disease, but if you do have the disease you may not be as affected by it as your less optimistic and less cheerful counterparts...

Heaven is indeed, helping.”

Daniel Tomasulo, Ph. D.



‘Stinkin Thinkin’

Careful research shows that people with pessimistic habits of thinking can transform mere setbacks into disasters.

Always blaming oneself is one of many ways to do this.



- **Catastrophizing:** “Henny Penny”: The sky is falling! It’s the end of the world! “That was my last clean shirt!”
- **All or Nothing:** “This ALWAYS happens”, “We’ll NEVER be able to do it”, “I’m a failure”, “Things NEVER work out for me”, You ALWAYS do this!”
- **What If Thinking:** “What if I lose all my money?” What if the plane crashes, What if the lab tests are bad?, etc....

Distorted Thinking



Aunt Sophie the pessimist





Differences in Thinking Have Consequences

Pessimists:

- Literally hundreds of studies show that pessimists give up more easily and get depressed more often.
- Pessimistic prophecies are self-fulfilling
- Mild pessimism has its uses...but if we habitually believe that misfortune is our fault, is enduring, and will undermine everything we do, more of it will befall us than if we believe otherwise.....
- So, that means:
 - we will get depressed easily
 - accomplish less than our potential
 - and even get physically sick more often

Martin Seligman, PhD, *Learned Optimism*



Differences in Thinking Have Consequences

- **Optimists:**
- Do much better in school and college, at work, and on the playing field
- Regularly exceed the predictions of aptitude tests
- If running for office tend to be elected more often than pessimists
- **Their health is unusually good**
- Some evidence shows they may live longer



Gratitude



**“Gratitude therefore takes
nothing for granted, is never
unresponsive, is constantly
awakening to new wonder
and to praise of the
goodness of God”
-Thomas Merton**



Highly grateful people, compared to their less grateful counterparts, tend to:

Experience positive emotions more often, enjoy greater life satisfaction and more hope, are more empathetic, forgiving, hopeful, and supportive.

They tend to experience less depression, anxiety, envy, and are less focused on materialistic pursuits.

They are also more spiritually and religiously oriented.

Research on Gratitude: McCullough et al.(2002)



Gratitude

- **The Lord Be with you**
- * **And Also with you**

- **Lift up your hearts**
- * **We lift them up to the Lord**

- **Let us give thanks to Lord our God**
- * **It is right and just**



Gratitude...

“What most attracts God’s grace is gratitude, because if we thank him for a gift, he is touched and hastens to give us ten more, and if we thank him again with the same enthusiasm, what an incalculable multiplication of graces!”

I have experienced this; try it yourself and you will see! My gratitude for everything he gives me is limitless, and I prove it to him in a thousand ways”

Saint Therese of Lisieux

(The Way of Trust And Love, p.111)



A self report measure that conceptualizes dispositional gratitude as a combination of four characteristics:

- 1. Acknowledgement of the importance of expressing and experiencing gratitude**
- 2. Lack of resentment with respect to benefits received (the person feels a sense of abundance in his life rather than deprivation)**
- 3. Appreciation for the contributions of others**
- 4. Appreciation for simple pleasures (sunsets, snow flakes, seasons-happen frequently) rather than extravagant pleasures (vacations, cars—happen infrequently)**

Gratitude, Resentment, and Appreciation Test (GRAT) Watkins et al. (2003) have drawn similar conclusions



The Gratitude-Challenged

- **Scholars have suggested that a number of attitudes are incompatible with a grateful outlook on life, including:**
 - **perceptions of victimhood (Seligman, 2002),**
 - **an inability to admit to shortcomings (Solomon, 2002),**
 - **a sense of entitlement (McWilliams & Lependorf, 1990),**
 - **envy and resentment (Etchegoyen & Nemas, 2003),**
 - **and an overemphasis on materialistic values (Kasser, 2002).**
- **A major personality variable that is likely to thwart gratitude is Narcissism (Watkins et al., 2003)**



Outcomes of a grateful disposition

GRATITUDE CAN BE CULTIVATED

- **Life satisfaction**
- **Optimism**
- **Volunteerism**
- **Happiness**
- **Lower anxiety and depression**
- **Less envy/possessiveness**



EMPIRICALLY VALIDATED TECHNIQUES

1) Count Your blessings/three good things or list three things in your life for which you are grateful.

- Three good things that happened today

2) The grateful letter:

- Similar to Count Your Blessings but with an interpersonal component

These have been shown to increase happiness for up to a month!





The Power of Connection





Validating Connection

Nothing in our lives can affect us more profoundly, both physically and emotionally, than our relationship with others. -Christiane Northrup, MD



Making the Connection Through...

Companionship
Friendship
Intimacy

*Allow for a healthy, emotional, relational, and spiritual life filled with
JOY!*



Finding the way...

Happiness vs. Joy

- **Is there a difference?**
 - **How can I tell?**
 - **Can I find joy?**



Defining Each...

Happiness

- Subjective blurred emotion (different meanings to everyone)
- External – money, belongings, status
- Temporary and varying
- Not present during periods of tribulation

Situational:

Based on Situations, events, people, places, things and thoughts.



Happiness

Linked to:

“When I graduate, when I get that job, when I lose ten pounds, when I get better, when he/she starts changing and treating me right, when I have enough money....and on and on

Future Oriented:

Puts all its eggs in someone else's basket. Hitches your wagon to someone else's.

Dependent on outside situations that are often outside of your control.

Chronic unhappiness can lead to despair and depression



The Difference

Joy

- **Combination of emotions**
- **Internal (state of mind)**
- **Attitude of the heart and spirit**
- **Spiritually rooted in contentment, confidence and HOPE**
- **Lasting, ever-present state**
- **JOY: IS NOT EXTERNAL!**
- **It cannot be bought**
- **It is NOT conditional on someone else's behavior**
- **It is NOT conditional on an event, situations, people, things, or thoughts.**
- **JOY IS NOT CONTINGENT ON ANYTHING IN ORDER TO EXIST.**
- **JOY TRAVELS WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.**



Joy is a fundamental disposition toward God...

What characterizes Christian joy in contrast to happiness lies in its ability to exist even in the midst of suffering, because joy has less to do with emotion and more to do with belief...

---Donald Saliers, 2002 - Belief as thoughts?



WHY ARE WE NATURALLY DRAWN TO JOYFUL PEOPLE?





WHY ARE WE NATURALLY DRAWN TO JOYFUL PEOPLE ?

Joy is a sign of God's presence, which is
naturally attractive to us

*We are drawn to Joy because we are drawn
to God*



Remember, Self Care is Not Selfish



“But I’m a priest/deacon”...

Christ and self-care...

*“But He Himself would often slip away into the wilderness to pray”
(Luke 5:16)*

"Love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:31)

God’s commandment is to love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves.

Loving yourself is not selfish.

It’s only selfish if you love yourself more than you love other people.



Summary:

- Self care is prevention
- A Healthy Lifestyle is attainable
- Wellness is the goal
- Nutrition/Prayer/Physical Activity/Sleep in BALANCE
- Optimism/Gratitude/Connection/Joy
- All these things inspire HOPE
- Establishing and maintaining your health isn't one decision...
- It's hundreds of decisions!





Resources

- Health and Wellness – videos, podcasts, print material
 - <https://www.sjvcenter.org/resources/>
- COVID-19 resources
 - <https://www.sjvcenter.org/covid-19-resources/>
- Call or email – **Confidential**
 - David Shellenberger
 - +1-888- 993-8885 – toll free
 - dshellenberger@sjvcenter.org