

abuse and neglect. A very worthy idea.

How many times do you think the word HOPE appears in the Bible? It depends on which translation you use, but an average of 140 is reasonably accurate. Here are some wonderful examples from the Psalms:

Psalm 9:18
For the needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the **hope** of the poor perish for ever.

Psalm 33:18
Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who **hope** in his steadfast love,

Psalm 33:22
Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we **hope** in you.

Psalm 39:7
And now, O Lord, what do I wait for? My **hope** is in you.

Psalm 42:5, 42:11, 43:5
And Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? **Hope** in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Psalm 62:5
For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my **hope** is from him.

Psalm 71:5
For you, O Lord, are my **hope**, my trust, O Lord, from my youth.

Psalm 71:14
But I will **hope** continually, and will praise you yet more and more.

Psalm 78:7
So that they should set their **hope** in

God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;

Psalm 119:114
You are my hiding-place and my shield; I **hope** in your word.

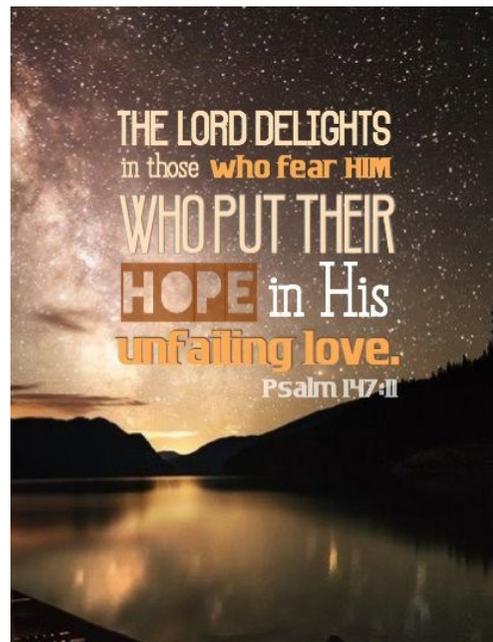
Psalm 119:116
Uphold me according to your promise, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my **hope**.

Psalm 119:147
I rise before dawn and cry for help; I put my **hope** in your words.

Psalm 130:5
I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I **hope**;

Psalm 146:5
Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose **hope** is in the Lord their God,

And a final psalm in the picture below:



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The following short reflection on HOPE (much needed in many places today) is taken from Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation from the Centre for Action and Contemplation. If you haven't found this, it is well worth signing up for. It's free and very good. This was from 31 May 21.

Foundational Hope

The Jesuit scientist Teilhard de Chardin wrote that "Love is the physical structure of the universe." [1] Our theological way of saying the same thing is "Let us create in our image" (Genesis 1:26), in the image of the triune God, who is love, who is a dynamic cycling of infinite outpouring and infinite receiving.

If our God is both incarnate and implanted, both Christ and Holy Spirit,

then an unfolding inner dynamism in all creation is not only certain, but also moving in a positive direction. A divine goal is always before us, waiting to be unveiled. The strong death wishes, mass shootings, suicides, and the high amount of emotional struggle we experience in our world today is surely, in part, a result of our major failure to provide Western civilization with a positive and hopeful understanding of our own "good news." And the good news must be social and cosmic, and not just about "me."

Foundational hope demands a foundational belief in a world that is still and always unfolding to something better. This is the virtue of hope. Personally, I have found that it is almost impossible to heal individuals over the

long haul, if the whole cosmic arc is not also a trajectory toward the good.

Admittedly, sometimes the suffering and injustices of our time make it hard to believe in the arc of love. Indigenous Choctaw elder and Episcopal Bishop Steven Charleston describes in practical terms how this love and foundational hope surround us at all times:

The signs are all around us. We can see them springing up like wildflowers after the prairie rain. People who had fallen asleep are waking up. People who had been content to watch are wanting to join. People who never said a word are speaking out. The tipping point of faith is the threshold of spiritual energy, where what we believe becomes what we do. When that power is released, there is no stopping it, for love is a force that cannot be contained. Look and see the thousands of new faces gathering from every direction. There is the sign of hope for which you have been waiting. . . .

Hope lets us literally see the presence and action of the holy in our everyday lives. This is not an imaginary desire viewed through rose-colored glasses. It is the solid evidence of the power of love made visible in abundance.

Sometimes, in this troubled world of ours, we forget that love is all around us. We imagine the worst of other people and withdraw into our own shells. But try this simple test: Stand still in any crowded place and watch the people around you. Within a very short time, you will begin to see love,

and you will see it over and over and over. A young mother talking to her child, a couple laughing together as they walk by, an older man holding the door for a stranger - small signs of love are everywhere. The more you look, the more you will see. Love is literally everywhere. We are surrounded by love. [2]

This is such a powerful reminder to use a contemplative gaze to look at the world around us. Signs of love abound, reminding us of God's essential nature.

[1] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Human Energy*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: 1969), 72.

[2] Steven Charleston, *Ladder to the Light: An Indigenous Elder's Meditations on Hope and Courage* (Broadleaf: 2021), 60–61, 67. Adapted from Richard Rohr, with Brie Stoner and Paul Swanson, "Love Evolves," *Another Name for Every Thing*, season 1, episode 4, March 9, 2019, [audio podcast](#).

Image credit: Chaokun Wang, *bamboo 天竹子* (detail), 2015, photograph, [Wikiart](#).

Image inspiration: *The capacity of bamboo to grow mirrors our own potential for inner unfolding. As long as there is life, there is evolution. As long as we have breath, our faith can continue to grow.*

I added the picture of "HOPE" to the bamboo. It is a later work from Robert Indiana in 2008, based on his 1964 work called "LOVE". From the website of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York:

Few Pop images are more widely recognized than Indiana's LOVE. Originally designed as a Christmas card

commissioned by The Museum of Modern Art in 1965, LOVE has appeared in prints, paintings, sculptures, banners, rings, tapestries, and stamps. Full of erotic, religious, autobiographical, and political underpinnings - especially when it was co-opted as an emblem of 1960s idealism - LOVE is both accessible and complex in meaning. In printed works, Indiana has rendered LOVE in a variety of colours, compositions, and techniques. He even translated it into Hebrew for a print and a sculpture at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.



What started as a Christmas card in 1964 became a sculpture in 1970.



In 2008 he revisited his iconic LOVE work and recast the sculpture as another four letter word: HOPE. He then used this image to create extensive merchandise from t-shirts to pins in support of Barack Obama's presidential campaign. "I was hoping to help him," says Indiana. "I was hoping Obama would fare well, and he did."



In 2014 HOPE too was erected as a sculpture in New York. One day, when



international travel is available again, I would love to see these sculptures. In the meantime, we will have to use YouTube for our art fix. There is plenty of great stuff to see. "Perspective" by Waldemar Januszczak is well worth checking out.

In the USA, a National Day of Hope was established on the first Wednesday in April in the year 2000 to highlight child