



Fr. Peter Mermier

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St. Francis de Sales

Wellspring - Fransalian Center for Spirituality
Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales

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'Be Your Best
Give Your Best
Do Your Best
and
Leave the Rest
to the Lord.'

Fr. Gus

Wellspring

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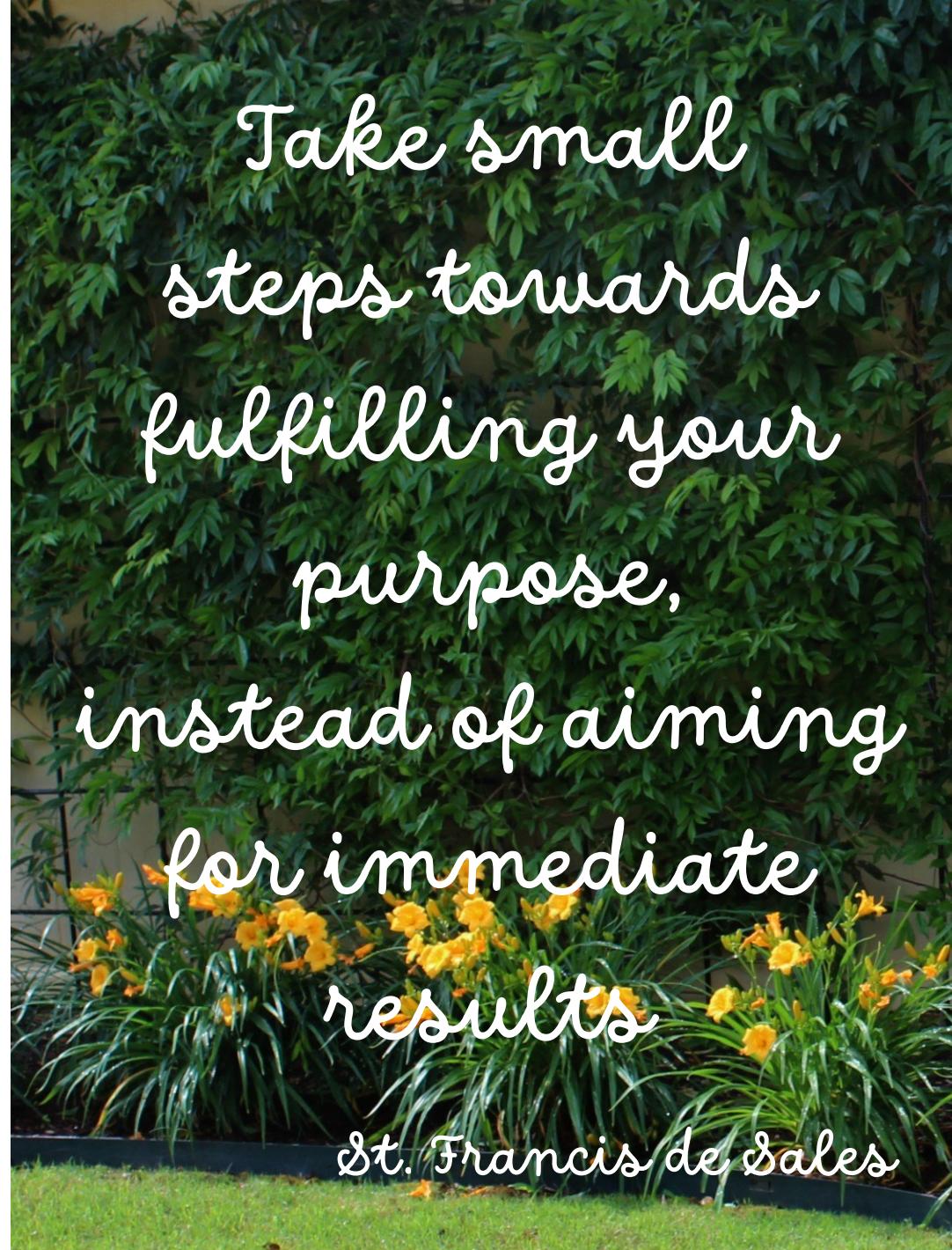
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Take small
steps towards
fulfilling your
purpose,
instead of aiming
for immediate
results

St. Francis de Sales



EDITORIAL

Our world needs hope. Our families need hope. Our children need hope. Hope is one of the most urgent needs of our world. Hope is our power in our powerlessness. It is this power that makes us optimistic, positive, creative and constructive. It is the power that makes us strive for excellence. It is also the power that enables and empowers us to hold our heads high during difficult and trying times. It keeps us reaching out beyond us and our present moments to something better and greater, confident that there is more.

I remember the story of a man who drifted into deep waters and was drowning. He became weary of trying and began to go under. He saw a drift wood in the distance and began reaching for it hoping that it could carry him out of the deep waters. The more he reached for it, the more it drifted away from him. He stayed focused on the drift wood and kept reaching for it. In this process he reached the shallow waters and was able to stand on his feet.

Signs of hope are all around us. All we need to do is to reach out and reach beyond. Be optimistic! Keep looking and reaching for the drift wood. Stay focused. Optimists look at the same world as pessimists but see the drift woods, notice different things and see the same things in different ways. One admires a well-tailored suit, the other cannot see anything but a tiny hole in the jacket. One enjoys the exertion of climbing a hill, the other worries about getting sweaty. The Scribes and Pharisees saw sinners and law-breakers in their world. Jesus looked at the same world and saw a "rich harvest", people to be gathered in. (Luke 10:2)

"Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God; but only he who sees takes off his shoes, the rest sit round it and pluck blackberries." (Elizabeth Barrett Browning). The optimist is alert, awake and sensitive enough to see the many ways that God shows up in unexpected places in unpredictable ways. God does appear to be popping up all over the place - uninvited and without a lot of fanfare - to let people know that He loves them.

Day by day God gives us new pieces to fit into this gigantic jigsaw puzzle of our lives. Some of these pieces are beautiful and well-fitting. Others are sharp and painful, drab and colorless. Only God knows the beauty that is possible when all the pieces have been faithfully put into place. We will know the beauty only after we have put into place the very last piece of ultimate surrender. We must allow the pieces to fit. We must allow the truth to unfold. We must accept and affirm the beauty in all its imperfection as it unfolds to its perfection. Be optimistic and let the pieces fit...and let the truth unfold to perfection.

Fr. Gus

RETREATS AND PROGRAMS AT WELLSPRING

We have many activities and opportunities for spiritual growth at Wellspring.

For more information about our programs and private retreats, please visit our websites, call or email us. Please consider joining us for one of the remaining retreats this year.

JOURNEY OF HOPE RETREAT - October 11, 2025

REMEMBERING MODELS OF HOPE RETREAT - November 8, 2025

ADVENT RETREAT - December 6. 2025

BROKENNESS TO WHOLENESS

In the beginning, God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth. God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth." (Genesis 1:26-28) This tells us who God wants us to be and what He wants us to do.

God wants us to be godlike and participate in the creative and governing work of the universe. When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God, the Almighty. Walk in my presence and be blameless." (Genesis 17:1) Jesus concluded his basic teaching on the mountain with the call, "Be perfect as the Father is perfect." (Mathew 5:48) We must strive to be perfectly who we are made to be and do perfectly what we are called to do. That is our God-given purpose.

This call of Jesus to perfection is addressed to all people since the Lord was speaking to all when He said, "Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." Perfection is not the prerogative of a few or a luxury of the chosen ones, but for all, and all are under an obligation to strive after it, no matter what their profession or state in life may be.

It is not easy to follow the Lord's call to perfection and be deliberate, intentional, purposeful and steadfast. His call sometimes takes us to places where we would rather not go. We are a broken people, living in a broken world. Brokenness is not something to be ashamed of or afraid of. That is just who we are. It just may be the missing ingredient to a life that emerges with a new kind of strength and experience not known before. Broken fragments are the birthplace of hope for new beginnings. Brokenness always carries a gift. We must look for it...seek and you will find.

Many men and women who have been chosen by God experienced brokenness. Jacob was a broken man at Peniel during his journey to Canaan; David was a broken man after his sin with Bathsheba; Jeremiah was a broken man cursing the day of his birth; Paul was a broken man on the road to Damascus; Peter was a broken man after the arrest of Jesus. So also were many other saints – great and holy men and women of our history.

St. Francis de Sales was born into a broken world and got caught up in that world. From the year 1534 the city of Geneva had become the bastion of Protestantism, and Calvin had conquered the whole region. The Catholic faith was suppressed with raids, pillaging and massacres; churches were destroyed, worship forbidden, priests exiled or put to death.

Francis was born into this broken world and found himself broken and in despair. A simple prayer to Mary, Our Lady of Good Deliverance, brought healing for his brokenness and his life was forever changed. It was in his brokenness that Francis found hope and emerged as a champion for joyful optimism.

Jeremiah was a broken man. In his brokenness, he cried out his frustration to the Lord and found peace. With all the disappointments and frustrations, he surrendered to God: "I say to myself: I will speak his name no more...then it becomes like fire burning in my heart...I must speak; the Lord is with me like a mighty champion." (Jeremiah 20) Jeremiah found God in his brokenness.

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Each of us has our own unique flaws. Don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them and go out boldly, knowing that in our weakness we find strength. St. Francis de Sales advises us, "Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections. Go courageously to do whatever you are called to do."

St. Francis de Sales says, "We must not fret over our imperfections ... we must be sorry for our faults, but in a calm, settled, firm way." Again, he says, "Alas, my poor heart, here we are, fallen into the pit we were so firmly resolved to avoid. Well, we must get up again and leave it forever. We must call on God's mercy and hope that it will help us to be steadier in the days to come." (Introduction to the Devout Life)

Being imperfect is not a problem. It is just the reality of being in a flawed, imperfect, messy and incomplete world. Nothing is perfect, and no one is perfect in our world. No one can do everything, and everything we do may not be complete or successful. There is a sense of freedom, liberation, and joy in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be imperfect and incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and complete and perfect it in His way.

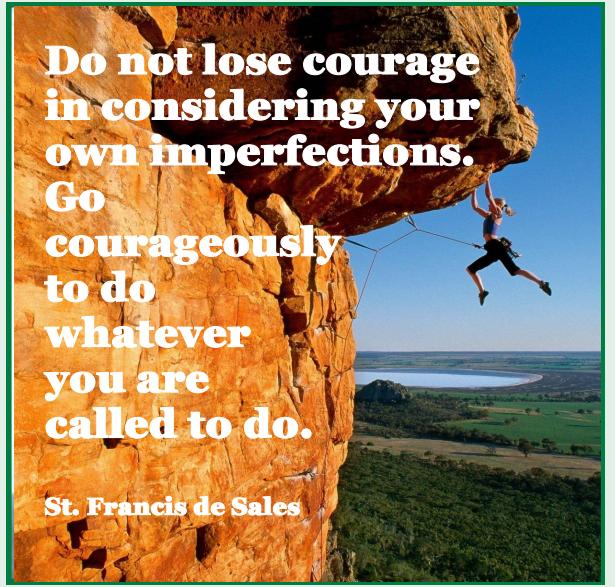
Being imperfect is not an excuse. It is a constant challenge. It is also a constant call to strive for perfection with utter confidence in our God, who will complete what He has begun in us.

The psalmist says, "The Lord will complete what he has begun." (Psalm 138:8) and St. Paul advises us as he did the Philippians, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion." (Philippians 1:6)

Remember the many great men and women of our spiritual tradition. In their imperfections, limitations and weaknesses, they found courage and let their faith carry them. Abraham and Sarah were old; Moses had a speech impediment; Miriam became jealous; Isaiah felt sinful living among sinful people; Jeremiah was too young; James and John were impetuous; Peter denied knowing Jesus; Paul persecuted Christians; Augustine lived a sinful life; Thomas Merton lived a Bohemian lifestyle and became a communist. All of these men and women and many other holy men and women in our history found grace in their imperfections and sinfulness to fan their spark of faith into flame and let their faith carry them forward to fulfill God's plan for their lives.

We must always remember that God calls us to perfection because that is who He made us to be. We are not perfect now; if we were, a call would be unnecessary. God calls us to holiness because we are not holy; if we were, a call would be unnecessary. God calls us to wholeness because we are broken; if we weren't, a call to wholeness would be unnecessary. Wholeness is holiness and holiness is perfection. Perfection is being who God made us to be and doing what He calls us to do and that is how we fulfill our God-given purpose. Our God of mercy will take our broken pieces and by his all-embracing, infinite, steadfast and unfailing love will make us whole again.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs



BEING MISSIONARIES OF HOPE

All followers of Jesus – from the Holy Father to the person in the church pew – are called to be missionaries of hope. Pope Francis said, “Christianity is not a school of ideas or a collection of beautiful temples and lovely art; it is a living people who follow Jesus and give witness to him every day. We are not a religion of ideas, of pure theology, of beautiful things and commandments. No, we are a people who follow Jesus Christ and give witness.” Christians have been commissioned by Jesus Christ to testify to the Gospel, the Hope of Eternal Life in Jesus.

During this Jubilee year, Pope Francis called us to be missionaries of hope and Pope Leo XIV continues to call us to be witnesses of hope. Jubilee's papal bull by Pope Francis was titled “Spes Non Confudit” which means “Hope Does Not Disappoint” (Romans 5:5). The document says, “In the spirit of hope, the apostle, Paul, addressed these words of encouragement to the Christian community of Rome. Hope is also the central message of the coming Jubilee. Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. (Excerpt from Jubilee's Papal bull)

“Hope is born of love that has been poured into the heart by the Holy Spirit. By his abiding presence in the heart of believers and in the life of the pilgrim Church, the Holy Spirit illuminates all believers with the light of hope. He keeps that light burning, like an ever-burning lamp, to sustain and invigorate our lives. Christian hope does not deceive or disappoint because it is grounded in the certainty that nothing and no one may ever separate us from God's love: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or the sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35,37-39). (Excerpt from Jubilee's Papal bull)

Our hope is rooted in the unconditional love of God for each human being. God never gives up on anyone. God's love is all-embracing, sacrificial, steadfast, unconditional, and unfailing. Hope in the Old Testament is centered on people like Abraham and Sarah. The Old Testament breathes an atmosphere of hope throughout—dynamic expectation, not a passive desire or wish. Even Israel's unfaithfulness did not hinder hope.

In the New Testament, Jesus announced the arrival of the Kingdom, the reign of God, in the world. It is a future near at hand, a future present in the present. The believer lives in hope. The concept of hope is most fully developed by St. Paul, especially in his letter to the Romans. We boast of our hope for the glory of God (Romans 5). In hope we were saved. But hope is not hope if its object is seen; how is it possible for one to hope for what he sees? Hoping for what we cannot see means awaiting it with patient endurance. Rejoice in hope, be patient under trial, persevere in prayer (Romans 8 & 12).

Jesus' resurrection is our most radical sign of hope. It means that the power of sin and death has been overcome, (1 Corinthians 15) and that we share in the freedom of the resurrection. We share in it as individuals and as a people. Believing in the resurrection means making a commitment to live in hope despite the injustices that we are aware of, despite the acts of violence that we read about or, perhaps, have experienced. We face the future, not knowing what the days and months will bring us or how we will respond. We have important challenges to face. We must live lives of faith and move in hope in the face of the difficulties and the tragedies that we face.

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Pope Francis

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Hope is a continual looking forward to the eternal. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the eternal that they have become so ineffective in the present. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth "thrown in."

Look within and around and see signs of hope, capture images of hope, keep them in your heart, cherish them and let them bless you and challenge you to be missionaries of hope. There are many signs of hope in you, in those around you, in the Church and in the world even during these troublesome times. Keep looking and you will find signs of hope. Rejoice in small victories and try to concentrate on the good already being done rather than continually lament the absences. This disposition leads us to hope and enables us to work for further change with perseverance. It is important to realize how you are a sign of hope for others: by your faith lived out in a commitment to compassion and peace, by your joyful love and by your persevering dedication.

We easily attach ourselves to trivial hopes (e.g. hope that the weather is good). All these trivial hopes should be subservient to the one fundamental hope - that our life will one day be fulfilled far beyond the shadow of our dreams.

Ultimate hope transcends all our other hopes. It transcends our earthly life. This hope has no expiry date. This ultimate hope breaks down all our illusions and helps us embrace with our whole being what is real, true, good, wise, redeeming, whole, authentic and ETERNAL.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Let Us be Missionaries of Hope by Choosing to...

- **Avoid negative conversation, Speak a constructive and positive language of hope.**
- **Develop a creative and positive vision of life and the world.**
- **Interpret events & experiences, even failures of life positively.**
- **Focus on the enjoyable and empowering aspects of life.**
- **Accept life with all its limitations, without whining about life's struggles & without complaining that life isn't fair.**
- **Be open to the many opportunities that the Lord sends.**
- **See the world as a blessing, a gift of God, full of possibilities.**
- **Recognize the abundance of life and blessings in the world.**
- **Accept imperfections and limitations with a sense of humor.**
- **Develop a healthy sense of humor to see the realities of life in meaningful ways & avoid prejudiced dogmatic thinking.**
- **Be at home and comfortable with your own incompleteness.**
- **Use reason, enlightened by faith, rather than being led by fear.**
- **Try new approaches, actively seeking more effective ways of achieving goals, and be willing to take calculated risks.**
- **Be confident in self. Believe that we can bring about good things and continue to do better and more.**
- **Believe you are worthy of success and believe the promises of Jesus, "I have come so that your may have life to its fullness (John 10) and that your happiness may be complete (John 15).**
- **Take personal responsibility. Take charge and create the conditions for success.**
- **Seek out those who will support and inspire, not discourage, distract, and undermine.**
- **Walk with good and noble people, who contribute to your health and wellbeing, who are joyful and optimistic.**
- **Do your Best, Give your Best, Go the Extra Mile.**

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs



HOPE ALIVE

She was looking forward to her visit. The trip would take her from the wheat fields of Nebraska to the beaches in California. The airport was fairly quiet that spring morning. No weather or traffic delays were in the forecast. The flight was scheduled to take a little more than four hours. As she boarded the plane she was happy to see she had a window seat. Soon a young man took the aisle seat next to her. They exchanged a friendly hello. As the plane took off down the runway she settled in with a new book.

After a while, she fell asleep. Then she began to hear a baby crying. When she awoke the pilot announced that they were entering a strong air disturbance. He told the passengers to sit tight and to stay seated with their seat belts on. The plane began to rock from side to side. Passengers became more worried as the plane was bouncing. All at once the plane seemed to drop in altitude. The pilot's voice once more said to sit tight. The young man next to her was very worried. She remained calm and was silently praying for a safe trip.

Finally, the young man spoke up and asked her how she was staying so calm? She smiled at him and said, "Well, I am on my way to see my new baby granddaughter. It will be wonderful to hold her and to spend time with my daughter and her family. But if this plane does not withstand this violent storm and we perish, I will see my husband and parents who will be waiting for me in heaven. Either way, I am going to see my family today."

After several more minutes the plane flew out of the storm and the plane leveled off. A calmness came over the passengers. The flight landed safely and as the passengers left the plane many thanked the pilot and crew for their safe journey. The young man also thanked his seatmate for her calm nature and for sharing her faith with him. She was a woman of faith and hope.

Faith in Jesus and hope in the eternal helps us to find peace amid the difficult happenings of this world. Corrie ten Boom said, "Look around you and you will be distressed. Look within you and be depressed. Look to Jesus and be at rest."

Patricia Cussen



Faith is like a bright ray of sunlight.
It enables us to see God in all
things as well as all things in God
St. Francis de Sales

LOOKING FOR HOPE

Through the years, Fr. Gus has emphasized the importance of being mindful of the virtue we are striving to grow in. St. Paul says, " Finally, brothers & sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." (Philippians 4:8)

I have heard Fr. Gus say, "If you look for hope, you will find it." It's so true. What a change that has made in my life. We hear so many people talk about how bad the world is right now, but seem to forget that God is still here with us & He always will be, giving us hope.

I recently saw an interview with a 92 year old lady. She had just finished loading her groceries into her car at the grocery store when a man got into her passenger seat and told her that he had a gun and demanded all her money.

She said, "No, I'm not going to give it to you. If you kill me, I will go to heaven and you will go to hell. Jesus goes everywhere I go, and He is in this car with me right now." The man looked around and started to cry. The lady told him about Jesus and encouraged him to pray and he said he would. She gave him \$10.00 and he got out of her car without hurting her.

I read lots of "feel good" stories like this and pass them on to my family and friends. I'm inspired by the "hope" I see each day. When I am looking for hope, love, generosity and kindness, I find them.

A close friend told me that I think everyone is "good." I don't think she meant it as a compliment but I actually was thrilled to hear that she thought that about me. I do try to see the good in others and give people the benefit of the doubt.

Many people are going through difficult times, and most people are doing the best they can, so thinking the best of others is something I strive to do. We all fall short, but most of the time, we get up and start over. That gives me hope. That gives me purpose.

Bari Walker

OUR FAVORITE
Purposefulness
& Hope **QUOTES**

When the world says give up, hope whispers try it one more time

YOU MUST CHOOSE WISELY TO LIVE WELL AND TO CHOOSE WISELY, YOU MUST KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE IS

Every person has a God-infused hunger for being part of something noble and purposeful.



There is a divine purpose in the adversities we encounter every day. They prepare, they purge, they purify, and thus they bless.

When you have found God within you, you have found your purpose.



A purposeful life is characterized by the influence it has on others.

GIVE YOUR LIFE TO SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF OR SOMETHING OTHER THAN YOURSELF AND LET IT BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF YOUR LIFE'S PURPOSE.

LIVE THE LIFE OF YOUR DREAMS ACCORDING TO YOUR VISION AND PURPOSE INSTEAD OF THE EXPECTATIONS AND OPINIONS OF OTHERS

HOPE
is meeting disaster with
COURAGE
knowing that you
are meeting it with
GOD

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IS NOT TO BE HAPPY. IT IS TO BE USEFUL, TO BE HONORABLE, TO BE COMPASSIONATE, TO HAVE IT MAKE SOME DIFFERENCE THAT YOU HAVE LIVED & LIVED WELL.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

"Spiritual Moments" is published each year by Wellspring, Fransalian Center for Spirituality. Its main purpose is to share "spiritual moments" and articles on various aspects of spirituality along with information on programs and events at Wellspring. It is circulated, primarily, among the many volunteers, participants, friends and wells-wishers of Wellspring and the Fransalian Missionaries.

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