

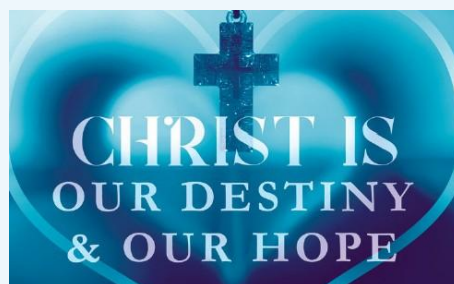


*From the Desk of Father Peter*

*Don't Let Anyone Rob You of Hope*

*These words were spoken by Pope Francis when he met a large number of school children from Jesuit schools in Italy and Albania in Europe. The wisdom of the phrase spoken by the Holy Father prompts me to use it as the title of my article this week.*

*We live in a society where what people do or say affects our lives. We tend to lose hope in our family, church, society, or in some person because of what they did or said. As we lose hope in ourselves and in our ability to cope with whatever the situation we are confronting is, we allow others to bring us down with them instead of uplifting and encouraging those who are in despair. It is said that fear and prejudice put up a terrible fight in us when they sense change coming; change we cannot deal with. Change is the root cause of some of us losing hope as we fail in our ability to trust the Lord or even encourage the other. We have all received "constructive criticism" at some point in our lives. This is valuable when the recipient has an open heart and doesn't react defensively. Yet what is more powerful, criticism or encouragement? The word of God exhorts us to "encourage one another daily while it is still 'today,' so that one grows hardened by the deceit of sin." Heb 3:13 Our Christian faith makes clear to us that although life involves suffering, suffering does not have to be the end of the story and can even be endured with a sense of peace.*



*Let's not kid ourselves; suffering is still unpleasant. But because*

*Jesus loves us so much that he suffered and died for us, and, because Jesus now lives in us, risen victorious from the sealed and guarded tomb, we can unite life's unavoidable challenges to that of our Savior in hope, knowing that our journey of faith will end happily as we accept the Lord's gift of salvation and live accordingly.*

*Hope can be a powerful force. Maybe there's no actual magic in it, but when you know what you hope for most and hold it like a light within, you can make things happen almost like magic. Many people commonly report how they feel better after going to confession. They say things that were on their chest for months or years are now gone. Those who truly repent and confess realize that their sins, which were once a heavy, dark part of them, are no longer*



*Easter Joy and Peace to All.*

*Fr. Peter*