

Good morning, everybody,

In today's world it is more difficult to have hope, we tend to fall into a trap of despair. Despair of the future and what will happen next, despair for our climate and as youth despair for what our lives will look like in even just five years.

What I know for sure is that it will look nothing like it does today. Already the next generation has a completely different life to what I had at that age. I look at my brothers and how they have PS5s compared to the stack of board games I used to force my mom to play. How aware they are of the news and current affairs compared to me barely knowing who the president was at the age of 8. Let me just say I was a smart 8-year-old just not that in touch with current affairs. Now I can look at this and say they don't have it as good as I did, or this generation are addicted screens and YouTube. Or I can look at it with hope, through playing on their PS5s my brothers can connect with their friends from home, they learn about football teams and can imagine what it would be like to be a manager of Chelsea or Liverpool. And how amazing is it that just the other day my brother came to me and told me of what is happening in Ireland at the moment. We can look at the new generation as screen addicts and lacking imagination, but if my brothers are any indication of what the younger generations are capable of, I am hopeful.

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, hope is defined as, "to cherish a desire with anticipation: to want something to happen or be true.". When I see this definition, I see that having hope is a choice. Choosing to believe that the next generation can make a change, choosing to believe that in 5 or 10 years the world will be a better place and will have peace. But like I said, in today's world choosing hope over despair is becoming more and more difficult.

Now I wish as a 20-year-old with all my newfound wisdom I could give a 10-step solution on how we can be more hopeful as a society and that maybe even just a little bit of hope can change the world. But sadly, my youthful wisdom does not go that far.

However, I can say that it is about perspective, the time old tale of glass half full or glass half empty. When I was younger used to think that it was your first instinct, that it was a test to see if you're an optimist or a pessimist. Now I believe it is all about how you chose to look at the glass, not what you see but how you chose to see it. I like to think I am always a glass half full person but it's getting more difficult to be optimistic all the time.

In the Catholic teachings hope is a theological virtue through which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life, placing trust in Christ's promises. It relies on the

grace of the Holy Spirit rather than personal strength. Hope is about perspective and how one choses to see the world. But like I said it is difficult to do that. In my experience asking for help shows the greatest strength. So why not ask the Holy Spirit or God for help.

Just over two years ago now I had a horrible experience in my final year of school. I was accused of being something I was not; it was very public and hurt me deeply. I lost all hope. I truly believed no one would see me the same again and I could never show my face at school again. No one around me knew how to help, my mom had no clue how to deal with this let alone help me deal with it. So, I asked for help. I went to my Archbishop at the time, Archbishop Dabula Mpako, and he told me something I would never forget. He said, that even if it is just a tiny flicker of light that brings me hope or peace or closer to God that it is bright enough for me to still hope. He reminded me that even a tiny flicker of light is still light and is still bright enough to guide me.

Hope is a funny thing, its different for everybody and everybody choses to be hopeful in different ways. But hope is hope no matter how big or small it is. I am choosing to be hopeful, hopeful in the future generations, hopeful that current world leaders will change, and that the world will change for the better and hopeful that if everybody has a little bit of hope the world might be a better place. It was St Augustine who said *“Hope has two beautiful daughters: their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are.”*

Thank you.