

# HOPE!!

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Wednesday morning of this past week, I opened an e-mail from my brother-in-law in Brazil, where he and my sister are retired missionaries. The e-mail was informing all (he has a long list of addresses) of a tragic event that happened early that morning, about 3AM. A retired policeman who was hired to guard their house was shot and killed when the policeman/guard returned to his own home. No real details were included in the e-mail except that he had a wife, children and grandchildren. We were asked to pray for him and his family. There is not a day that goes by that we don't hear or read of someone being killed. They are shot down, stabbed or blown apart as part of some sick daily routine. Everyday our young and old are victimized by the brutality of other human beings. There is no age group free of this reality. We could easily lose hope if we let this fact conquer our minds and our hearts. While these horrible events do happen almost at every moment of modern life, somewhere around the world, (to borrow from the *Lion King*) it is not the whole *daily report*, only that which sells newspapers. Lest we sink in the mire of depressing news, I would like to offer two short events that may inspire us (I always include myself as needing inspiration and growth) to hold on to hope and believe in the future. The following are in themselves narrow in their scope but powerful in their vision for the future.

Event 1: Tuesday, June 12, I was on a bike ride (50 mile day) and stopped at the Dairy Queen at 25 Mile Rd. and Shelby, in Shelby Township. This was a planned stop as my route was centered on this *halfway point*. At the Dairy Queen, ahead of me was a large group of young children from the nearby elementary school. They turned out to be a class of second graders who were also on a planned outing with the same destination. When I got off my bike to eat my lunch and savor a vanilla cone, two young girls, sitting at a small table got up and offered me the use of the table. I thanked them but declined. Still they insisted, after all, I was "old." What could I do but thank them again and accept. A young boy came up and said that I looked thirsty and that they had free water inside, could he get me a glass. I finished my sandwich and was enjoying the true purpose of my stop when another young boy comes up to me and offers his hand for a handshake. He says to me, "And you sir are..." When I gave him my name and shook his hand he said, "Pleased to meet you Mr. Stimpson, I'm Mike Schmidt." These children were from a secular school, a *public school*, no less, but were getting some of the basic values of human respect down right.

Event 2: (This is actually an ongoing event worthy of constant mention) People are being fed! Every time my wife and I make a donation to some charity, we get a "thank you, but please give more" letters. It gets wearisome after awhile and eventually we just stop giving to that charity. We all know that there will "never be enough food" to feed everyone who comes to the rectory door. ***BUT!!!*** Knowing this, I can't begin to thank you and your Christian generosity enough for all the food you donate every week. Every person who comes to the door, asking for food says "Thank you. And God Bless you." They're not just saying it to me, or just saying it without meaning. Those who receive food from our pantry, food donated out of your generosity and faith, are deeply grateful to you, the parishioner. *You are thanked and whished God's blessing.*

I find a lot of personal confidence and hope in the daily examples of the gospel values of love and forgiveness. We will seemingly always be affronted with the negative side of human nature, but if we care to look and listen, we can also see greater examples of Christian love and respect for human dignity. We can be aware of the negative and take precautions, but we should also be encouraged and excited about all the good being done by one neighbor for another. *A Rose just doesn't Grow in Brookline*, it grows everywhere. Enjoy life and don't lose hope.