



Saved in Hope: Spe Salvi

Pope Benedict XVI

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Pope Benedict XVI's second encyclical, *Saved In Hope*, ("Spe Salvi" in Latin) takes its title from St. Paul, who wrote, "In hope we have been saved." In this special deluxe hardcover edition of the work, the Holy Father continues a line of thought he began with his first encyclical, *God is Love*.

Love and Hope are closely related in the spiritual life. Love of God involves hope or trust in God. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man." Hope enables us to look to the next life, but it also inspires and purifies our actions in this life. Pope Benedict considers modern philosophies and the challenges of faith today in light of the virtue of hope.

"Confronted by today's changing and complex panorama, the virtue of hope is subject to harsh trials in the community of believers. For this very reason, we must be apostles who are filled with hope and joyful trust in God's promises. In contemporary society, which shows such visible signs of secularism, we must not give in to despair."

-- Pope Benedict XVI

Saved in Hope: Spe Salvi Details

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Dominik says

Read this. Don't wait for the book, go to http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/ben... and read it.

It's accessible, enlightening, and true.

There's incredible richness and depth in the Holy Father's words here, richness and depth that will take several readings spaced out over months -- and years -- to sink in.

I could fill this review with a wall of quotes, but it might just be easier if you'd read *Spe Salvi* in its entirety. It's that good.

The Pope casts a wide net in this encyclical, the net of hope. This net encompasses much of human endeavors: our relationship to God, our relationships to each other, both personal and political. He considers each of these in turn, with a calm, measured perspective, using the sword of Reason, sharpened by Faith, to cut through the shadows and darkness and reveal Truth -- the Person of Jesus Christ, Our God and Our Redeemer, Our Savior and Our Hope.

Ben De Bono says

The formidable wisdom and intellect of Pope Benedict are on full display in his second encyclical. Reading this is a wonderful reminder of what a blessing the church was given by being placed under Benedict's leadership for eight years.

Many of the themes in this volume reminded me of N.T. Wright's *Surprised by Hope*. The two would make a wonderful paired reading and would not doubt prove fascinating if placed in conversational analysis with one another.

Maurizio Codogno says

Dopo *Deus Caritas Est*, la seconda enciclica di papa Ratzinger tratta della speranza. Si possono fare delle scommesse se un'eventuale terza enciclica sarà sulla fede :-). A parte questa battuta piuttosto scontata, ammetto che questa enciclica mi ha piuttosto deluso. Io da un'enciclica mi aspetto un testo che, anche se non a livello di dogma, riporta il pensiero ufficiale della Chiesa Cattolica. Qua, almeno nella prima metà dell'enciclica, abbiamo tutta una serie di dottissime citazioni papali che con la speranza c'entrano ben poco, e al limite riguardano la fede, non la speranza. Tutte cose che in una lectio magistralis mi stanno molto bene, ma qua mi sembrano piuttosto forzate. C'è poi naturalmente il leit-motiv di questo papa, vale a dire lo scontro diretto contro il concetto scientifico moderno. Il guaio di base da Bacone in poi, secondo Ratzinger, è legato al passaggio da un'idea "comunitaria" a una individualistica, passaggio che è stato persino assorbito dalla teologia cristiana (sezione 25). Il metodo scientifico ridarebbe infatti all'uomo il dominio sull'universo, dominio che aveva perso col peccato originale (16), facendo diventare così irrilevante la fede (17). Il progresso è "ragione e libertà", entrambe volte direttamente contro fede e Chiesa (18). Il pensiero marxiano viene liquidato facendo notare che manca di una pars construens, come visto nella sua applicazione leninista (21). Naturalmente Benedetto XVI ce l'ha anche con il cattolicesimo attuale e rimpiange i bei tempi

andati, con le offerte a Dio delle proprie piccole fatiche (40).

Dal punto di vista teologico, probabilmente non c'è nulla di nuovo, ma non sono certo un teologo di vaglia: ci sono però punti interessanti. La parte sulla fede "performativa" e non "informativa" (10), ad esempio, oppure il fatto che la libertà dell'uomo è intrinsecamente insopprimibile (24). La speranza deve inoltre essere verso qualcosa di infinito (30), il che porta inevitabilmente alla speranza nel Giudizio Finale: una bella immagine, che associa alla giustizia divina la speranza. L'ultima parte dell'enciclica, oltre a darle il titolo, è in effetti la più interessante dal punto di vista teologico, anche se la sezione finale sulla Vergine Maria dà quasi l'aria di essere stata aggiunta all'ultimo momento.

Onestamente, però, mi aspettavo qualcosa di più: è un po' come quei temi che si fanno senza nessun errore di grammatica, scritti anche benino, ma che non scaldano per nulla il cuore.

Ryan says

Suffice it to say, there were several things I found quite intriguing in this encyclical: the frankness with which Pope Benedict approaches the problems of materialism, fatalism, and the "faith in progress," bequeathed to us by the Enlightenment (he cites Francis Bacon); the steering away of Christian life from a self-centered concern for merely one's own salvation, focusing instead on creating hope in others, and not merely in this world, but in the "Kingdom of God"; and lastly, his treatment of the union of justice and grace in God's judgment -- God gives his grace as a gift to all who found themselves on Christ, but this does not erase the evil that is done, from whose wounds and scum we must be purified. In my reading of Pope Benedict's encyclicals, I've been impressed with his ability to be both academic (e.g. discussion of "hypostasis," "hyparchonta," Marx, Lenin, etc.) and devotional, to draw on, in a disarming and holistic way, all the monuments of tradition so that the fullness of the Catholic Faith can shine forth -- intelligent and beautiful. Next, "Caritas in Veritate"!

verbava says

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??? ???? ?????????? ????????????? ????? ?????, ??, ? ?????????, ?? ????

No one lives alone. No one sins alone. No one is saved alone. The lives of others continually spill over into mine: in what I think, say, do and achieve. And conversely, my life spills over into that of others: for better and for worse. So my prayer for another is not something extraneous to that person, something external, not even after death. In the interconnectedness of Being, my gratitude to the other—my prayer for him—can play a small part in his purification. And for that there is no need to convert earthly time into God's time: in the communion of souls simple terrestrial time is superseded. It is never too late to touch the heart of another, nor is it ever in vain.

Santeri Marjokorpi says

Benedictus XVI puhuu kiertokirjeessään kristillisestä toivosta ja sen sisällöstä. Benedictuksen tapaan tämä sisältää erittäin syvällistä ajattelua. Nautiskelin suuresti taas kerran Benedictuksen marxismi- ja yhteiskuntakritiikistä, joka osuu napakymppiin aikamme ajankohtaisissa keskusteluissa. Kristillinen toivo ei ole sitä, että teemme maailmasta utopian politiikan välityksellä. Kun toivo suunnataan politiikkaan, syntyy vain autoritaarista vallankäyttöä. Samoin myöskään tiede tai tekniikan kehittyminen ei tuo lopullista toivoa, vaan se lisää samalla uhkakuvia. Pääviesti on että lopulta vain sillä, jolla on Jumala, on toivoa.

Christopher Pokorny says

Great for Advent devotional reading!

Jon Coronel says

Brilliant!

Affirmed my perspectives about Faith.

Favorite part: On the exploration of Faith based on Heb 11:1

"Faith is the "hypostasis" of things hoped for. The "elechos" of things not seen."

Hypostasis as substance, essence, firm foundation and elechos as proof, evidence, demonstration implying objectivity rather than subjectivity.

Similarly in another article, Benedict demonstrated that Faith is indeed objective - which simply means knowing "God as Love". Thus, Faith, is an Objective Truth that gives us great Confidence - the intersection of the Future (Heaven) and our Present Reality (through Christ)

Chris says

One of only three encyclicals Pope Benedict XVI penned before stepping down as Supreme Pontiff, "Spe Salvi" is an examination of the nature of hope, its relationship to faith, how it is experienced in life, and its place in salvation. Perhaps surprising for those unfamiliar with Benedict, or relying on the media's portrayal of the former Cardinal Ratzinger to form their opinion of the man, "spe Salvi" is a joy to read and presents some of the central tenets of Christianity in a way that fosters devotion to Jesus. The product of a man who is undoubtedly one of the intellectual powerhouses of the modern world the encyclical nonetheless is easy to read and presents the pope emeritus' thought in such a way that it can be understood by the average layman without undue effort.

While it reads quickly, "Spe Salvi" is weighty enough to provide a reader with ample material for reflection and meditation. After finishing the encyclical one is left with the feeling that Benedict XVI embodies the saying of G.K. Chesterton that one should "Let your religion be less of a theory and more of a love affair." Moreover, he leads others further on the road to this goal through his teachings as head of the Church.

The nature of Benedict's teachings, which as pope are nothing more than the faithful representation of the teachings of Christ in a way fitted for the people of today, make his resignation as pope bittersweet. His profound yet approachable teaching style will be sorely missed, while at the same time the teachings he left us will become important documents in leading the Church into the future and fostering the faithful's encounter with Christ.

Tanya says

Pope Benedict XVI has an amazing talent for writing and is a brilliant man. I loved this book and look forward to reading more of his works!

Alicia says

I'm re-reading this for an article I'd like to read. I'm understanding it better the second time through and I REALLY prefer reading it in a nice little booklet instead of a computer print-out. :)

Quilltips says

Just as with *Deus Caritas Est*, this is one of the most profound works I've read in years. Pope Benedict has written a beautiful, concise explanation of the meaning of hope for everything from life after death, to the purpose of suffering, the interactions between politics and religion, science, atheism, and what it actually means when people talk about Jesus having "redeemed" us --

-- and he did it in 60 pages. Absolutely brilliant.

Rodolfo says

Ante el sombrío panorama de crisis internacionales, conflictos bélicos, terrorismo, desequilibrios económicos, problemas medioambientales, desorden moral y corrupción política, muchos cristianos, y hombres en general, pierden la esperanza y se sienten tentados a caer en el pesimismo y a abandonar la lucha. Frente a esta situación, Benedicto XVI, sale al encuentro en esta Encíclica presentando en horizonte de esperanza y animando a trabajar y a esforzarse para hacer frente a los males de nuestro tiempo, combatiéndolos con coraje.

Una de las afirmaciones clave de la encíclica es: «Quien tiene esperanza vive de otra manera, una vida nueva». Por eso, el papa quiere ofrecer un horizonte de esperanza a la humanidad y afirma que la vida "no acaba en el vacío". Precisamente este saber distingue a los cristianos. Señala el Papa que el marxismo ha dejado una destrucción desoladora. Pese a los agudos análisis de Marx, este olvidó que el hombre es libre y que un mundo sin libertad no sería un mundo bueno. Esta libertad necesita una esperanza que la oriente en medio del sufrimiento, las frustraciones y los fracasos de la existencia y de la historia. Habrá un Juicio de Dios, «que es nuestro consuelo y esperanza». Afirma que el progreso material ha traído nuevas posibilidades para el bien, pero también abismales posibilidades para el mal. La ciencia no redime al hombre, el hombre es redimido solo por el amor de Dios, el Dios que nos sigue amando «hasta el extremo».

Anima a una autocrítica del cristianismo que ha de superar la tentación de una religiosidad individualista. El cristiano, animado por la esperanza, ha de ser para los otros, ha de solidarizarse con todos.

Benedicto XVI subraya en el texto la doctrina sobre la existencia del purgatorio como dolor que transforma para el amor y del infierno como cerrazón definitiva al don de la alegría eterna, pero también precisa: si el Juicio Final fuera «pura justicia, podría ser al final solo un motivo de temor» para los hombres y que «en cambio la gracia nos permite esperar y encaminarnos llenos de confianza al encuentro con el Juez». Según el pontífice, es «imposible» que la «injusticia» de la historia sea la última palabra: «Dios es justicia y crea justicia. Este es nuestro consuelo y nuestra esperanza».

El Papa afirma que Jesús no trajo al mundo un mensaje «socio-revolucionario», sino algo mucho mayor: «el encuentro con el Dios vivo, con una esperanza más fuerte que los sufrimiento de la esclavitud y que por ello transforma desde dentro la vida y el mundo». Según el pontífice, Cristo hace verdaderamente libre al hombre y no somos esclavos del universo ni de las leyes y casualidad de la materia: «No son los elementos del cosmos lo que gobiernan el mundo y el hombre, sino que es un Dios personal quien gobierna las estrellas, es decir el universo. Somos libres porque el cielo no está vacío, porque el Señor del universo es Dios que en Jesús se ha revelado como Amor».

Termina con un himno a María como ejemplo de esperanza: «Santa María, tú fuiste una de aquellas almas humildes y grandes en Israel que, como Simeón, esperó “el consuelo de Israel” (Lc 2,25) y esperaron, como Ana, “la redención de Jerusalén” (Lc 2,38)».

Jordan says

Kevin only gave this 3 stars because his heart is full of vinegar (#33).

Neil R. Coulter says

I find Benedict a very encouraging and challenging writer, and both of those characteristics are in the forefront of his second encyclical, *Saved in Hope*. He begins with Romans 8:24--"in hope we were saved"--and then asks: "what sort of hope could ever justify the statement that, on the basis of that hope and simply because it exists, we are redeemed? And what sort of certainty is involved here?" From that question, Benedict spins out a beautiful answer.

In this encyclical, as in other of Benedict's writings, I especially enjoy how he continues to bring the discussion back to the idea of community. We are wrong to regard faith as merely an individual choice. Instead, we need to reclaim the perception of interconnectedness between all people. In opening a survey of modernism and how it led us to where we are now, Benedict asks:

How could the idea have developed that Jesus' message is narrowly individualistic and aimed only at each person singly? How did we arrive at this interpretation of the "salvation of the soul" as a flight from responsibility for the whole, and how did we come to conceive the Christian project as a selfish search for salvation which rejects the idea of serving others? (40-41)

In concluding this part of the discussion, he states:

On the other hand, we must also acknowledge that modern Christianity, faced with the successes of science in progressively structuring the world, has to a large extent restricted its attention to the individual and his salvation. In doing so it has limited the horizon of its hope and has failed to recognize sufficiently the greatness of its task--even if it has continued to achieve great things in the formation of man and in care for the weak and suffering. (57)

As he says, the kind of better world that "progress" promises cannot be the total elimination of evil and suffering, because each generation has its own choices to make and those choices are the same regardless of

the world we live in.

The other section of this encyclical that I really liked was Benedict's presentation of what the true "good life" really is, and how we aim for it. He cites Augustine:

But then Augustine also says: looking more closely, we have no idea what we ultimately desire, what we would really like. We do not know this reality at all; even in those moments when we think we can reach out and touch it, it eludes us. . . . We do not know what we would really like; we do not know this "true life"; and yet we know that there must be something we do not know towards which we feel driven. (32-33)

That really hit some things that have been on my mind lately.

Another noteworthy point about *Saved in Hope* is in the section beginning on page 94 (Section 45), in which Benedict seems to regard purgatory as an experience that is not in-time; in other words, that the purification of purgatory might be thought of as an instantaneous burning under the gaze of Jesus. But even in this discussion, Benedict repeatedly brings it back to the importance of community and interconnectedness, including between people still in this world and people in the next.
