STUDIA NAUK TEOLOGICZNYCH
TOM 21 (2026)

DOI: 10.24425/snt.2026.1753

Received: OCT 8, 2025
Accepted: NOV 18, 2025
Published: NOV 20, 2026

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CHRISTIAN HOPE AND THE JUBILEE YEAR 2025: INSIGHTS FROM THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Jubilee Year 2025, celebrated under the theme *Pilgrims of Hope*, offered the Catholic Church a profound opportunity to deepen its identity, renew its faith, and bring healing to a fractured world through the transformative power of Christian hope. Rooted in mercy, justice, and spiritual renewal, this hope found its theological grounding in *Spes non confundit* – "hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5), a phrase Pope Francis invoked to encourage trust in divine providence amid contemporary social, political, and ecological challenges.

Pope Francis consistently emphasized hope as a hidden virtue that sustained individuals through adversity. The Jubilee, announced through the papal bull *Spes non confundit* and earlier Vatican communications, marked a global moment of spiritual renewal. Drawing from Leviticus 25, the Jubilee tradition called believers to embrace reconciliation and justice, reflecting on their relationships with God, others, and creation. In this context, Christian hope emerged not as an abstract concept but as a tangible responsibility for every believer.

While the Jubilee Year is a universal celebration, this article focuses specifically on its theological and pastoral significance within the American Church. In the United States, Christian hope assumes special relevance amid increasing

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polarization, systemic inequities, and cultural fragmentation. Historical movements such as the abolition of slavery in the 19th century and the civil rights movement of the 1960s, which sought to secure equal rights for African Americans, were animated by Gospel-rooted hope and the promise of justice (King 1975; Stanford 2020). To illuminate this dynamic, the article draws on two influential American theologians, Reinhold Niebuhr and Jonathan Edwards, whose Protestant perspectives offer complementary insights: Niebuhr's realism and ethical engagement provide a framework for hope amid social complexity, while Edwards's eschatological vision and emphasis on divine grace highlight hope as a transformative spiritual virtue. Though neither is Catholic, their reflections resonate with broader Christian themes and invite ecumenical dialogue.

To balance these voices, the article also considers key Catholic thinkers whose contributions have shaped American theological discourse on hope, justice, and public life. Avery Dulles's ecclesiological reflections, John Courtney Murray's work on religious freedom and pluralism, and Dorothy Day's spirituality of mercy and solidarity offer distinctly Catholic perspectives that deepen the Jubilee's pastoral relevance. These figures embody the Church's commitment to hope as both a theological virtue and a social imperative.

This paper explores the theological foundations and pastoral applications of the Jubilee Year 2025, drawing on Pope Francis's teachings and the proclamation *Spes non confundit*. It considers the contributions of American theologians and the social teachings of the Catholic Church, including key USCCB publications such as *Open Wide Our Hearts* and *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. These documents demonstrate how Christian hope can mobilize believers to confront racial injustice, economic inequality, and political division.

Finally, the study examines USCCB initiatives such as *Pilgrims of Hope* and the *Thriving Congregations Initiative*, which aim to strengthen faith, build resilient communities, and foster social renewal. It also acknowledges the Church's ongoing recovery from the sexual abuse crisis and the moral urgency of abolishing the death penalty, as emphasized by Pope Francis (*Spes non confundit*, 10). Through theological reflection and practical engagement, this research affirms the Jubilee Year 2025 as a vital moment to rediscover Christian hope as a transformative force, capable of shaping a more just, compassionate, and unified future within the American ecclesial landscape.

2. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN HOPE

Christian hope, a fundamental theological virtue and integral aspect of Catholic teaching, instills confidence in God's promises and sustains believers through life's adversities. Pope Francis has reemphasized its significance in the context of

the Jubilee Year 2025, portraying hope as a force that drives Christians and their communities toward self-renewal, reconciliation, and altruism. His teachings, including *Spes non confundit* ("Hope Does Not Disappoint"), elaborate on the interplay between hope, faith, and charity, underscoring its role in the Christian life (Francis 2025).

Describing hope as a dynamic attitude, distinct from mere optimism or naive expectation, Pope Francis emphasizes its hidden yet essential nature. In his 2013 article *Hope: The Hidden Virtue*, he likens hope to a seed that, though unseen, ultimately bears fruit in the believer's sanctification and spiritual journey. This vision aligns with his broader theological emphasis on a Christianity engaged with worldly suffering while oriented toward redemption. In his 2016 general audience, he further stressed hope's eschatological dimension: "Christian hope is not based on mere human optimism but the certainty that God's mercy will always prevail." These teachings root hope not in fluctuating worldly conditions but in God's unwavering promise of salvation.

One of the core values embodied in *Spes non confundit* is the transformative power of hope, which fosters resilience and social change. Pope Francis advocates for a Jubilee that celebrates faith through works of mercy and justice, aligning with his theological emphasis on social responsibility as an essential component of discipleship. By linking hope to social justice and communal renewal, he encapsulates the essence of Catholic social teaching, viewing Christian hope as a catalyst for transformation. The Jubilee Year 2025, with its theme *Pilgrims of Hope*, calls believers to manifest this virtue through concrete acts of compassion, reconciliation, and service to the marginalized (USCCB 2025).

To deepen this theological reflection, the article engages voices from American Christian thought. While Pope Francis offers a contemporary global vision of hope rooted in Catholic teaching, American theologians such as Reinhold Niebuhr (Protestant) and Jonathan Edwards (Puritan) provide historical and cultural depth to its expression in the U.S. context. Though neither is Catholic, their reflections, marked by ethical realism and eschatological fervor, offer fruitful dialogue partners for understanding hope in a society marked by moral complexity and spiritual longing. Their insights, when read through a Catholic lens, enrich ecumenical dialogue and illuminate the broader Christian witness to hope.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971), a distinguished theologian and ethicist, is renowned as one of the architects of Christian realism. His work elucidates the tension between human sinfulness and the moral obligation to pursue justice, offering a nuanced perspective on Christian hope. In *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, Niebuhr critiqued utopian visions that assumed humanity's capability for perfect justice, instead asserting that history is replete with conflict and moral ambiguity. Yet he maintained that Christian hope affirms God's grace as operative within history, even amid its contradictions. His famous Serenity Prayer,

"God, give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change…," embodies this realistic yet hopeful stance.

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), a key figure in the First Great Awakening, understood Christian hope eschatologically, as a trajectory toward fulfillment. He viewed hope as a reflection of God's sovereignty and a mechanism through which individuals are drawn into ultimate restoration. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards described hope as the virtue that aligns human desires with God's purposes, asserting that it is through earthly trials that one's faith is most secure. His legacy continues to influence evangelical spirituality, especially in its emphasis on moral responsibility and spiritual awakening.

To balance these ecumenical voices, the article also highlights Catholic theologians whose contributions have shaped American understandings of hope. Cardinal Avery Dulles emphasized the Church's eschatological mission and the role of hope in ecclesial renewal. John Courtney Murray advanced Catholic engagement with pluralism and public life, offering a hopeful vision of religious freedom grounded in natural law. Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, embodied hope through radical hospitality and solidarity with the poor, her spirituality of mercy remains a living witness to the Church's social teaching.

Although *Spes non confundit* does not explicitly reference Niebuhr or Edwards, their theological insights complement Catholic reflections on hope. Niebuhr's ethical engagement illuminates the tension between hope and historical struggle, while Edwards's emphasis on divine grace deepens our understanding of hope as a spiritual virtue rooted in providence. Their inclusion is not to suggest direct influence on Pope Francis, but to enrich the theological conversation surrounding the Jubilee Year by drawing on voices that have shaped American Christian thought.

These theological foundations not only illuminate the nature of Christian hope but also shape the Church's pastoral response, particularly in guiding believers toward concrete expressions of mercy, justice, and communal renewal. The Jubilee Year 2025 serves as a powerful reminder of these theological considerations. It calls believers to embrace hope as both a theological virtue and a practical commitment, capable of supporting and guiding individuals and communities toward renewal and reconciliation. By integrating the teachings of Pope Francis, Catholic social doctrine, and ecumenical insights, the Church can foster a deeper understanding of Christian hope, grounded in divine promise yet actively engaged in addressing human suffering and striving for social justice.

3. CHRISTIAN HOPE IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

Christian hope has indelibly shaped the trajectory of American social progress since the nation's inception. In the 19th century, those advocating for the abolition of slavery were profoundly inspired by biblical hope. The Exodus narrative, wherein God liberates an oppressed people to freedom, served as a potent paradigm for their own plight. This theological belief resonated deeply within spirituals and sermons, fostering a serene yet resolute hope among enslaved African Americans for eventual emancipation. Similarly, these efforts found fervent support among white Christian activists, including Quakers and evangelical revivalists. These individuals contended that "real Christianity would be subversive" in a society founded on slavery, and they believed it was their divine mandate to upend the status quo (Coffey 2006, 174).

Even the most calamitous setbacks could not extinguish this hope. Sociologist Herbert Gans observed that, following the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision in 1857, which decreed that Black people were not and could never become citizens, abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass "learned what it meant to hope against hope." Douglass interpreted this egregious ruling as a catalyst that could ultimately invigorate the abolitionist movement and hasten the demise of slavery (Wilson-Hartgrove 2021, 45). Throughout the protracted struggle to abolish slavery, it was this unwavering conviction that God would not permit injustice to prevail that sustained their efforts. In this context, Christian hope transcended mere optimistic thinking; it was a steadfast belief, contrary to all visible evidence, that a divinely ordained and more just future was imminent.

The Social Gospel movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries further perpetuated this thread of hope. Baptist theologian Walter Rauschenbusch championed what he termed "social Christianity," asserting that the Kingdom of God, a concept Christians traditionally associate with the heavenly realm awaited in the afterlife, was not merely a distant future aspiration but a tangible social reality to be constructed on earth. This movement espoused the inherent goodness of human nature and harbored lofty aspirations for social reform, convinced that society would continually improve as a direct manifestation of Christ's love (Green 2024, 3–5).

While ministering to impoverished immigrants in New York's "Hell's Kitchen," Rauschenbusch became persuaded that Christian love necessitated more than individual acts of charity; it demanded the overhaul of unjust societal structures. He and his fellow proponents of the Social Gospel believed that the ills of poverty, inequality, and inadequate wages could be addressed through the principles of justice and brotherhood espoused by Jesus. This was a distinctly hopeful theology: sin was not confined to individual hearts but was also entrenched within human systems, which could be redeemed by God's grace (London 2020, 102–5).

During this period, many churches adopted the motto of an expanded and strengthened message of salvation to address the challenges of modern life. They established settlement houses, advocated for labor rights, and supported causes as diverse as child welfare and women's suffrage, all while nurturing the conviction that Christian values could foster a more equitable America. Prior to the disillusionments brought about by the First World War, Progressive Era Christians often exhibited a verdant optimism, utterly confident that with divine assistance, "humanity can come ever nearer" to achieving justice, peace, and an ideal kingdom (Welton 2015, 78).

While the Social Gospel was largely Protestant in origin, its emphasis on structural sin and social redemption found resonance in Catholic social teaching. Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, embodied a parallel vision of Christian hope, one rooted in the Beatitudes, expressed through radical hospitality, and sustained by Eucharistic devotion. Her conviction that "love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams" reflects a hope that is neither sentimental nor abstract, but forged in solidarity with the poor and marginalized. Day's theology of mercy and justice continues to inspire Catholic engagement with systemic injustice and grassroots renewal.

Not all theologians of the era espoused such an idealistic view. Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971), one of the preeminent American theologians of the twentieth century, lived through the cataclysms of the Great Depression and World War II, and he cautioned against naïve utopianism. Despite this, Niebuhr steadfastly maintained the necessity of Christian hope, though a hope tempered by realism. In his seminal work *The Irony of American History* (1952), Niebuhr poignantly reflected on the limitations of human endeavor: "Nothing [worth doing] is completed in our lifetime; therefore, hope must be saved by the best of what we hope for" (Niebuhr 1952, 63). In essence, the perpetual quest for justice and goodness necessitates an enduring hope. This hope is anchored not in our own efforts to achieve success, but in the providence of God, safeguarding us from cynicism and despair in the face of persistent societal wickedness across the ages.

Niebuhr – whose writings have been extensively read by generations of American Christians – articulated the dualism of sinful human nature and redemptive divine purpose throughout history. He maintained a therapeutic balance of hope, even when material progress stagnated amid the tumult of two brutal wars, offering solace in the face of adversity.

In the Catholic intellectual tradition, Cardinal Avery Dulles offered a complementary vision of hope grounded in ecclesial mission and eschatological expectation. He emphasized that the Church, while imperfect and historically burdened, remains the sacrament of salvation and a sign of God's enduring fidelity. Similarly, John Courtney Murray's reflections on religious liberty and the Amer-

ican experiment articulated a hopeful engagement with pluralism, rooted in the belief that truth and freedom are not opposed but mutually illuminating. These Catholic voices affirm that Christian hope is not merely a private consolation but a public vocation, one that calls believers to shape society in light of the Gospel.

The embodiment of Christian hope was perhaps most vividly realized during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s. Black churches served as vital incubators of hope, nurturing the conviction that deliverance from segregation and racial injustice would eventually come. One prominent figure who personified this hope was the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist minister and theologian who drew deeply from the traditions of both the Black Church and the Social Gospel. A new generation could draw inspiration from King's early ministry, as exemplified in a 1952 letter: "Let us keep going, letting us hope, work, and pray that in the next generations, we will live to see a world with no wars, a better distribution of wealth, and a brotherhood no matter race or color" (King 1952). He envisioned this Gospel as the foundation for proclaiming hope to the world.

King's "gospel" was essentially the application of Christian hope to social conditions: the belief that the world as envisioned by God is one characterized by peace, economic justice, and racial harmony, and that it is the duty of believers to strive toward this vision. He frequently invoked biblical narratives to inspire hope, as seen during the Montgomery bus boycott and the Birmingham campaign. King assured activists that their righteous suffering was redemptive: "And let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream," emphasizing that, over time, justice would ultimately prevail.

In his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech (1963), King eloquently articulated this hope, envisioning a time "when the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight," a clear echo of Isaiah's prophetic vision. This steadfast hope empowered African Americans to endure arrests, beatings, and even martyrdom, with the belief that their faithful witness would contribute to the redemption of the nation (King 1963, 267).

Christian hope was not a passive waiting, but a catalyst for unity and activism, leading to the formation of a determined movement. Churches became the epicenters for mass meetings and prayer vigils, with hymns like "We Shall Overcome" providing a melodic expression of hope. The Civil Rights Movement drew ecumenical and interfaith support, showcasing the unifying power of hope: priests, rabbis, and Protestant ministers stood arm-in-arm in Selma, united in their conviction that "all God's children" were entitled to equality (Wilson-Hartgrove 2021, 47). Observing from the cloistered walls of his monastery, Catholic monk Thomas Merton described the movement as a "spiritual phenomenon" born from hope, a unique convergence of people of faith asserting that the sinful realities of their time were not the end of the story (Wilson-Hartgrove, 49).

This aligns with theologian Jürgen Moltmann's insight, widely discussed in American seminaries at the time, that "those who hope in Christ cannot put up with reality just as it is any longer but must begin to suffer under it, to contradict it" (Wilson-Hartgrove 2021, 50). Indeed, Charles Davis argues that Christian hope engenders a "conflict with the world" when worldly injustice confronts the promise of God. The Civil Rights Movement exemplifies this dynamic: a faith-filled hope among believers that the Kingdom of God, a realm of equality ordained by God, was imminent. This hope generated a positive perception among the people, leading to renewed efforts and an enhanced fighting spirit (Wilson-Hartgrove 2021, 51–52).

Beyond nationally recognized movements such as abolition and civil rights, a diverse array of faith-based initiatives throughout U.S. history have embodied Christian hope in concrete ways. In the mid-20th century, the ideals of the Social Gospel were carried forward by figures like Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, a movement envisioning "the New Christendom, built in the shell of the old," and hoping for "a genuinely new society" (Day 2015, 210–12). Day's spirituality of mercy, rooted in the Eucharist and the Beatitudes, exemplified a Catholic hope that was both contemplative and radically engaged.

During the Cold War, inspired by Pope John XXIII's prophetic encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, Christian peace activists such as the Berrigan brothers protested nuclear arms, animated by a hope for a world without war. In the 1980s, churches participating in the Sanctuary Movement offered refuge to Central American migrants, grounding their ministry in biblical narratives of Exodus and the Holy Family's flight to Egypt, interpreting these stories as a lived expression of Christian hope (USCCB 1986, 3).

In both small and large ways, each of these efforts treated hope as "the virtue that has moved suffering people to work together for change throughout human history" (Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove 2021a, 53). As Wilson-Hartgrove succinctly puts it elsewhere: "This is the hope that ended slavery, gave rise to the labor movement, and inspired the civil rights movement" (2021b, 54). Thus, whenever Americans have endeavored to "repair the world" in fidelity to the will of God, they have drawn on the reservoir of Christian hope, the hope of a coming reign of justice and peace ordained by God, and the conviction that, as the New Testament states, we are all called to partner in its realization.

American theologians have deeply pondered the dynamics of hope. James H. Cone, the progenitor of Black Liberation Theology and a Protestant voice, vehemently critiqued any theology that relegated hope solely to the afterlife. In the post-civil rights era and amidst ongoing racial struggles, Cone asserted, "Black theology has hope for this life. The appeal to the next life is a lack of hope" (White 2018, 88). He contended that Christian hope must manifest as tangible

liberation from oppression in the present, rather than merely as an eternal reward in the hereafter. To do otherwise would be to acquiesce to injustice. Cone redefined hope as a form of rebellion against injustice, a practical, action-oriented concept that confronts the harsh realities of this world (White 2018, 89).

This perspective, borne out of the Black American experience, illuminated for many within U.S. Christendom that genuine hope must be translated into action. Latino and feminist theologians in America similarly interpret Christian hope through the lens of their communities, finding in the resurrection of Christ a pledge of empowerment for the marginalized in the here and now (Gautier 2020, 112). Despite their different emphases, these theologians share a common refrain: Christian hope is not an escapist fantasy; it is the grace of God that empowers communities to withstand despair and "determine their destiny" in alignment with divine righteousness.

Thus, throughout American history, Christian hope has functioned both as an ark preventing despair (theological virtue) and as a driving force propelling efforts toward justice (practical catalyst). It is this dual character, anchored in divine promise and expressed in courageous action, that continues to shape the Church's mission in the United States today.

4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In contemporary America, the imperative for Christian hope has become especially urgent, given the nation's deepening social wounds, persistent racial disparities, economic inequality, and political polarization, that threaten both civic trust and moral imagination. While Christian hope is a universal virtue, its expression is always shaped by context. In the American landscape, remarkable for its racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, and for the visible leadership of Black, Hispanic, and other minority citizens across civic and ecclesial life, recent decades have nonetheless witnessed a marked erosion of shared values and communal resilience. This paradox makes the theological and social dimensions of hope particularly vital. As sociopolitical divisions intensify, hope offers not only a unifying vision but also an animating force to confront these challenges. Far from being a relic of the past, hope represents a radical act of faith, a practice demanding determination and courage, that galvanizes believers to heal the nation's wounds and guide their communities toward righteous action. As Pope Francis affirms in his Jubilee reflections, Christian hope "teaches us that it can be done: there is a more just world within reach" (America Magazine 2025).

While undeniable progress has been made in the United States since the civil rights era, especially in dismantling overt forms of racism and expanding opportunities for minority leadership, racial injustice remains a complex and unre-

solved issue. Structural disparities and tragic events, such as the church shooting in Charleston, SC, and the murder of George Floyd, reveal that discrimination continues to afflict American society in subtler but still painful ways. Central to the struggle against racism is Christian hope, which empowers believers to persevere through years or even decades of incremental progress. In their 2018 pastoral letter *Open Wide Our Hearts*, the U.S. Catholic bishops situated the fight against racism within the context of Christian hope, proclaiming, "As Christians, our hope is that one day we will all gather in heaven to be with people from 'every nation, race, people, and tongue'" (USCCB 2018, 6).

This vision of hope underscores the belief that the pursuit of justice and equality is not merely an earthly endeavor but a divine mandate. It calls for sustained commitment, fortified by the conviction that, despite the slow pace of change, justice will ultimately prevail. Christian hope thus serves as both a theological virtue and a practical catalyst, propelling efforts toward creating a more just and equitable society.

In response to the ongoing racial divide, churches have become sanctuaries for interracial dialogues, pray-ins, and ministry collaborations. Numerous congregations have intentionally examined their biases, striving to identify as "agents of reconciliation" (Childress 2016, 88; Guess and Tisby 2019, 15). Following the 2014 racial unrest in Ferguson, Missouri, sparked by the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed Black teenager, Black and white pastors exchanged pulpits and convened town hall vigils, hoping that their faith could mend racial fractures. Black churches, in particular, continue to embody hope through worship and social action, exemplifying a "refusal to let evil have the last word" (Childress 2016, 91). When the churchgoers forgave the gunman who murdered them in Charleston, they demonstrated the Christian conviction that love triumphs over hate. Notably, South Carolina's then-Governor Nikki Haley responded swiftly to defuse tensions, and the broader public reaction, marked by solidarity rather than racial hostility, reflected a meaningful shift in a state once marred by deep racial divisions. This moment of grace and restraint signaled how far the racial climate has evolved, even amid ongoing challenges. Their actions echoed Pope Francis's exhortation in *Fratelli tutti* to offer "renewed hope" to a world marred by violence (America Magazine 2025, 4). Despite the undeniable economic disparity between racial communities, hope persists at the grassroots level.

Christian hope also confronts the pervasive injustice of economic inequality. While it is true that poverty in the United States is less severe than in many parts of the world, and that few Americans experience absolute destitution, the nation still tolerates extreme disparities in wealth and opportunity. Hundreds of thousands live below the poverty line, facing food insecurity, housing instability, and limited access to healthcare and education. In the face of such structural injustice,

it is easy to succumb to cynicism. However, Christian hope demands a belief in the possibility of change. As Gerald Schlabach articulates, and as affirmed by the U.S. bishops in their 1986 letter *Economic Justice for All*, "Christian hope has a much better basis than any economic system… [it] rests on the conviction that God is at work in the world, [preparing] a preferred future, a new dwelling place, and a new earth where justice will live" (Schlabach 1987, 4).

Faith communities transform this hope into tangible actions through advocacy for just housing, living wages, and debt relief. Churches operate shelters, food banks, and free clinics, not merely as acts of charity, but as embodiments of hope, concrete signs of the anticipated time when "all people share in the earth's abundance" (Schlabach 1987, 4). Faith in the potential for change also sustains campaigns for economic justice, from Catholic lobbying for fairer taxes to evangelical efforts promoting financial literacy. In low-income communities, pastors preach about God's provision and counsel individuals to pursue education and economic opportunities. This manifestation of Christian hope challenges systemic oppression and counters individual despair alike.

Yet the Church itself is not immune to suffering. The ongoing recovery from the sexual abuse crisis, the bankruptcy of numerous dioceses, and the erosion of trust in ecclesial leadership have deeply wounded American Catholicism. These realities test the virtue of hope in profound ways. And yet, precisely in this context, the Jubilee Year 2025 becomes a summons to renewal, a call to rediscover the Church's mission as a bearer of mercy, justice, and healing. As Pope Francis reminds us, Christian hope is not naïve optimism but a grace that enables believers to confront brokenness with courage and to labor for a future reconciled in Christ.

Through these efforts, Christian hope acts as both a theological virtue that prevents despair and a practical catalyst that propels the pursuit of justice throughout American history.

The U.S. criminal justice system, which incarcerates more of its citizens than any other developed country, presents a significant challenge that Christian hope seeks to address. The over-incarceration of Black and Latino individuals highlights systemic racial and economic disparities. Nevertheless, faith-based organizations such as Prison Fellowship and various Catholic prison chaplaincies have long worked to bring Christian hope to prisons and jails. Operating under the belief that no soul is beyond redemption, they advocate for rehabilitation rather than retribution. In his appeal for global prison reform, Pope Francis emphasized that "justice is never unconditioned and severe but always conditional and merciful, namely, the possibility of repentance and restitution" (*Spes non confundit*, 2025). Christian lobbying has already influenced U.S. policy, finding bipartisan support for reforms such as reducing mandatory sentences and expediting trials, while advocating for rehabilitation over incarceration. Each step toward a more

equitable system testifies to the transformative power of hope in changing hearts and institutions.

The plight of immigrants in the United States has become an increasingly pressing moral issue. Recent political rhetoric portraying migrants and refugees as threats to society has prompted many churches to respond with a renewed commitment to hospitality. They recall the Holy Family as refugees and recognize the image of God in every foreigner. Catholic and evangelical groups are actively resettling families, providing hospitality, and offering legal assistance. Their efforts resonate with Pope Francis's challenge "to stand up in defense of the most vulnerable […] open wide your doors […] for no one should have to be stripped of the hope of a better tomorrow" (*America Magazine* 2025, 4). Faith-driven advocacy has been instrumental in shifting the conversation toward humane immigration policies that balance law with compassion. Organizations such as those assisting unaccompanied minors and supporting individuals protected by DACA, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which offers temporary legal protection to undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, embody hope in action, upholding the vision of America as a "Mother of Exiles," a City on a Hill, to paraphrase Emma Lazarus's inscription on the Statue of Liberty (USCCB 2025, 2).

Christian hope also inspires ecological stewardship. The growing impact of climate change has prompted a distinctly faith-driven response among Christian communities, where care for creation is increasingly understood as a theological expression of hope. Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* frames environmental concern not merely as a scientific or political issue but as a moral imperative rooted in hope, a hope that resists fatalism and affirms the possibility of renewal. In response, churches across the United States have formed "Green Teams," installed solar panels, cultivated community gardens, and advocated for sustainable legislation, embodying hope through tangible acts of ecological justice. Interfaith Power & Light exemplifies this movement, mobilizing Christians and other faith traditions to confront climate injustice through coordinated advocacy and education. These efforts echo the U.S. bishops's 1986 pastoral message, which declared that "as we look forward in hope to a true communion with God, we must be stewards of creation" (USCCB 1986, 228). In this light, every tree planted and every river restored becomes a sacramental sign of Christian hope, a testimony that the future is not foreclosed by despair but open to transformation through faithful action.

Hope acts as a connective tissue throughout America, fortifying communities to confront the challenges of racism, economic disparity, a fractured criminal justice system, immigration issues, and environmental degradation with steadfast Christian hope. It remains a powerful force, both a theological virtue that sustains

the spirit and a practical catalyst that drives the pursuit of justice, equality, and stewardship.

The Jubilee Year is a venerable tradition in the Catholic Church, wherein certain years are dedicated to spiritual renewal, forgiveness, and the deepening of faith. In this spirit, Pope Francis has designated 2025 as an Ordinary Jubilee Year, with the theme *Pilgrims of Hope*. This theme draws inspiration from St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, emphasizing that "hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5). The Jubilee Year is an inviting call for believers worldwide to embark on a spiritual pilgrimage, rekindling the eternal love of the Lord and witnessing the transformative power of hope in their lives.

The Jubilee Year commenced on December 24, 2024, with the ceremonious opening of the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. This act signifies the Church's invitation to all the faithful to experience the mercy and grace of God during this special year. Traditionally sealed, the Holy Door is opened during Jubilee Years to symbolize a pathway to freedom and restoration, encouraging pilgrims to seek reconciliation and spiritual healing. The theme *Pilgrims of Hope* deeply resonates with the theological sensibilities of our humanity and underscores the Church's mission in today's world (Francis 2024).

Pope Francis preaches hope amid a world rife with conflict, pandemic, and climate crisis. He urges the faithful to "fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help all gather strength and certainty for the future, to make it their own, by opening the mind, the heart, and the eyes, to the future" (Francis 2024). This Jubilee Year stands as a testament to the enduring relevance and transformative potential of Christian hope, a hope that does not disappoint, but rather renews, reconciles, and restores.

To foster global participation in the Jubilee Year, the Vatican and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) have implemented a suite of digital initiatives, including a mobile app and live webcams. The *Iubilaeum25* app enables users to register as pilgrims, receive free Pilgrim Cards, and plan visits to the Holy Door, while webcams at sites such as St. Peter's tomb offer virtual access for those unable to travel (USCCB 2024). These tools reflect a sincere effort to make the Jubilee spiritually accessible across geographic boundaries.

However, their impact warrants critical reflection. While early reports suggest strong engagement from digitally connected communities, these initiatives may inadvertently exclude individuals without smartphones, reliable internet, or digital literacy, raising questions about equity and inclusion. In a Church that proclaims preferential care for the poor, it is essential to ask whether technological outreach alone can embody the Jubilee's spirit of mercy and communion.

Nonetheless, these efforts represent a meaningful step toward global participation, especially when paired with local parish-based programming and analog

resources. When digital tools are used not as substitutes but as complements to embodied community life, they can help extend the Jubilee's call to renewal and solidarity. The challenge remains to ensure that no one is left behind, not in Rome, nor in the digital margins of our own neighborhoods.

For pilgrims preparing to travel to Rome during the Jubilee, the American bishops encouraged the following:

Visiting the Four Major Basilicas: A quintessential pilgrimage entails visiting St. Peter's Basilica, St. John Lateran, St. Paul Outside the Walls, and St. Mary Major, each of which has its Holy Door opened for the Jubilee. Passing through these doors symbolizes entering into a more profound relationship with Christ (USCCB 2024).

Major Events: Numerous significant events will take place at the Vatican, including special Masses, catechesis, and cultural initiatives. Detailed schedules and information are available through the official Jubilee calendar (USCCB 2024).

Practical Considerations: Given the anticipated influx of pilgrims, it is advisable to arrange lodging and itineraries well in advance. The accumulated knowledge and experience of organizers ensure ideal routes and logistics, allowing pilgrims to focus on prayer without logistical concerns (USCCB 2024).

For those unable to travel to Rome, local dioceses and parishes are encouraged to provide meaningful Jubilee experiences:

Holy Doors: Many cathedrals and specially designated churches around the world will open Holy Doors, symbolizing a passage to spiritual renewal. By visiting these sites, the faithful can receive the graces of the Jubilee without leaving their region (USCCB 2024).

Jubilee Prayers: Participate in prayer services, Masses, Eucharistic adoration hours, and other events that foster reflection on the themes of the Jubilee, hope, renewal, and transformation within our communities (USCCB 2024).

Teaching Programs: Engage in workshops, Bible study sessions, and lecture series that explore the meaning of the Jubilee and its relevance to individual faith journeys (USCCB 2024).

Acts of Mercy: Organize local community service projects, such as food or clothing drives and visiting the sick, in alignment with the Jubilee's call to live out mercy and compassion (USCCB 2024).

Central to this Jubilee are two prayers: the official Jubilee Prayer, crafted to encourage and unify believers during this holy year. It emphasizes faith, hope, and charity, urging believers to be "tireless cultivators" of "the seeds of the Gospel." The prayer expresses a longing for the arrival of God's Kingdom and the renewal of humanity and the cosmos. It concludes with a request that the grace of the Jubilee awaken in us, as Pilgrims of Hope, a desire for heavenly riches and that the joy and peace of the Redeemer shine throughout the earth (USCCB 2024).

Through these initiatives, the Jubilee Year becomes a time of spiritual enrichment and active participation in the communal life of the Church, fostering hope and renewal on both local and global scales.

The Lilly Endowment's National Storytelling Initiative on Christian Faith and Life is a significant endeavor aimed at promoting the hope-filled vitality of Christianity through both media and narrative. Launched in 2023, the initiative's mission is "to unlock and tell compelling stories that portray the vibrancy and hope of Christian faith and life," inspiring hearts and deepening people's faith. In essence, Lilly Endowment is funding organizations to bring to light and share real-life stories that demonstrate the meaningful impact of Christian faith in the lives of individuals and communities. This effort recognizes that storytelling serves as a powerful tool for evangelization and encouragement: real stories of grace can touch hearts more effectively than abstract theology (Lilly Endowment 2023).

To expedite the mission of this initiative, Lilly Endowment has awarded grants to 12 organizations representing a diverse array of Christian traditions in an initial invitational round. Individual grants, each up to $5 million, fund projects designed to create and disseminate stories of faith. For instance, a Catholic media ministry, *America Media*, will produce a short film highlighting how Latino Catholic communities manifest their faith in America, emphasizing hope and resilience through immigrant narratives. Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary is organizing public storytelling festivals where Christians will share first-person accounts focusing on the joys and struggles of discipleship. Trinity United Church of Christ, a historically Black congregation in Chicago known for its emphasis on social justice and inclusive ministry, will produce films and podcasts about individuals whose lives have been transformed by Black Christian spirituality. Notices of awards from the initiative prominently feature names such as Catholic Charities USA, underscoring the animating work and benevolence of the Catholic Church in sharing its stories of hope (Lilly Endowment 2024).

These storytelling efforts complement the Jubilee's call to witness and renewal. By amplifying voices from diverse communities, they affirm that Christian hope is not confined to doctrine but lived in the daily struggles and triumphs of

believers. In this way, the Church's mission to proclaim hope becomes not only theological but deeply personal and communal.

The Lilly Endowment's National Storytelling Initiative is poised to have a multifaceted impact. These projects will generate films, publications, and digital media to reach broad audiences, offering positive narratives of faith in a world where religion is often viewed with skepticism. As Lilly's vice president for religion noted, leaders of faith communities frequently find that compelling stories of service, discipleship, and community are overshadowed by reports of church closures and declining religious life. This concern drives the Storytelling Initiative, a means of amplifying stories of Christian hope that might otherwise go unheard.

For the Church, this initiative represents an opportunity to inspire the faithful and reach others by bearing witness to the Gospel in action. An inspiring story about a life transformed by Christ or a community engaged in service can encourage believers and intrigue skeptics alike. Theologically, this initiative embodies the Church as a "living narrative" of salvation, magnifying modern-day parables, true stories in which the very hope that Christ embodies is revealed, thus imparting hope to all who hear them (Lilly Endowment 2024).

A second significant effort inspired by Christian hope is Lilly Endowment's *Pathways for Tomorrow* initiative, which introduced a new round of grants in 2025 aimed at bolstering theological education. This initiative seeks to empower seminaries and divinity schools to better prepare pastoral leaders for the future. By investing in the formation of priests, ministers, and lay ecclesial ministers, *Pathways for Tomorrow* addresses the critical question of who will lead the Church and convey the message of hope to the next generation, and how they can be most effectively prepared.

Under the Pathways initiative, theological schools are invited to submit proposals for projects that strengthen their educational and financial models for leadership development. Each school may receive up to $1 million for initiatives such as curriculum innovation, faculty development, new partnerships, or plans to serve diverse communities. The focus is on preparing schools to address contemporary challenges, demographic shifts, declining enrollments, and the need for intercultural competency, so that future pastors and lay leaders are equipped to evangelize and minister in an evolving world. This second round (2023–2025) builds upon the first (2020–2022), during which more than 100 theological schools developed strategies for becoming more sustainable and mission-driven.

Importantly, *Pathways for Tomorrow* has extended support to Catholic theological institutions. For example, the University of St. Mary of the Lake (Mundelein Seminary) in Illinois received a $5 million grant to implement *Cor Iuxta Meum*, a collaborative project with other U.S. seminaries to develop new meth-

ods of priestly formation. This initiative explicitly supports the USCCB's *Program of Priestly Formation*, aiming to prepare priests who are both theologically and pastorally equipped to meet the needs of today's Church (USCCB 2025, 76). By backing such endeavors, *Pathways for Tomorrow* complements the bishops's priorities in leadership development. Well-formed pastors and lay leaders will be able to cultivate the virtue of hope among the faithful through sound preaching, compassionate pastoral care, and effective evangelization (Holmes 2024).

The Lilly Endowment's *Thriving Congregations Initiative*, launched in 2019, is dedicated to helping churches become more resilient and vibrant in a rapidly changing world. This program empowers intermediary organizations, such as dioceses, seminaries, and church networks, to collaborate with local congregations to revitalize their ministries. It encourages faith communities to "explore and understand their rapidly changing social and cultural contexts" in order to clarify their mission and adapt their practices in alignment with their theological traditions (Lilly Endowment 2019).

Since its inception, *Thriving Congregations* has provided hundreds of grants to Christian organizations developing programs that enhance parish life and outreach. Beneficiaries include Catholic parishes and diocesan projects, as well as Protestant and Orthodox efforts, all contributing to a broader church-wide movement to rejuvenate congregational ministry. Key themes include expanding outreach and service to those in need, fostering unity amidst diversity, and engaging the next generation. Some projects equip churches with tools for digital evangelism and community building, an essential skill set in the post-COVID world. Others support ministries addressing racial reconciliation, mental health care, and bridge-building in communities divided by political or cultural rifts.

A common thread running through these efforts is the use of Christian tradition and spirituality to address contemporary challenges. Practices such as prayer, liturgy, and Scripture study are leveraged to reinvigorate a parish's sense of mission. Healthy churches extend their reach beyond their own communities, embodying the role of "salt and light" in the world (Matt 5:13–16), and enabling them to influence and transform their surroundings.

By equipping churches to love God and neighbor more faithfully, the *Thriving Congregations Initiative* aims to multiply the flourishing of Christian hope at a network level. It demonstrates that churches need not resign themselves to decline or division as inevitable. Instead, by God's grace, they can "imagine new ways to share God's love in their communities" and thrive in ministry. This initiative reflects a profound commitment to ensuring that the virtue of hope remains vibrant and effective within faith communities, fostering resilience, renewal, and transformative witness (Lilly Endowment 2025).

5. SIGNS OF CHRISTIAN HOPE IN ACTION

Christian hope is best understood not merely in doctrine but through action. Across the globe, countless manifestations of hope emerge through individuals and communities living out their faith in Christ. This section explores concrete examples of this phenomenon, revealing how hope becomes incarnate in daily life.

At the local level, lay ministers and Catholic volunteers play a vital role in embodying Christian hope within their communities. Far from peripheral actors, these individuals, described by the USCCB as "the heartbeat" of parish life, serve as theological agents whose actions reflect the Church's mission of mercy and solidarity (USCCB 2018). Whether organizing parish food pantries, visiting the homebound, or mentoring at-risk youth, their ministries exemplify what Pope Francis calls "the field hospital" of the Church, places where wounds are tended and dignity restored. Their work is not merely charitable; it is sacramental in nature, revealing the presence of Christ in acts of service.

Moreover, the witness of ordinary believers who endure suffering with faith, those who forgive, persevere through addiction, or reconcile fractured relationships, offers a lived theology of hope. These stories, often overlooked in academic discourse, affirm that Christian hope is not confined to doctrine but enacted in daily life. As theologian M. Shawn Copeland observes, "the practice of hope is a refusal to surrender to despair; it is a commitment to the possibility of transformation" (Copeland 2010, 87). In this light, lay ministry becomes a prophetic sign, not only of what the Church does, but of who the Church is.

On a global scale, the Church's humanitarian and missionary efforts shine as beacons of hope. Organizations such as Catholic Relief Services and Caritas Internationalis provide aid in disaster-stricken and war-torn regions, driven by the conviction that no suffering human being is beyond the reach of God's mercy. In refugee camps, hospitals, and schools run by religious orders, and in missions to remote corners of the world, Christians uplift the vulnerable, serving as vessels of hope for those who might otherwise feel forsaken. Additionally, the Church addresses global issues as an advocate for the oppressed. For instance, the bishops of the United States and Mexico jointly authored *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, urging society to treat migrants with compassion and justice, and to recognize them as fellow travelers on our shared journey of hope (USCCB 2003, 19–20). When Christians cross borders to serve and reconcile, they become "pilgrims of hope" in action, making God's love tangible.

Faith-based organizations (FBOs) have long been at the forefront of addressing societal needs, providing essential support in areas such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, educating the young, and caring for the sick.

Their contributions not only advance the common good but also build solidarity within communities. In many instances, FBOs reach marginalized populations more effectively than secular programs, alleviating suffering and fostering dignity among beneficiaries (Asomugha, Derose, and Lurie 2011, 52). Christian advocacy for peace and justice, such as racial equality and the protection of the unborn, propels society toward higher moral norms. Through these initiatives, the faithful become co-workers in "renewing the face of the earth," creating the conditions for hope to take root within social systems (Bielefeld and Cleveland 2020, 25).

In West Texas, for example, community partners including the Salvation Army and the Basin Dream Center have collaborated to address child and youth homelessness. These faith-based organizations provide resources and strategies to assist families in financial distress, emphasizing the importance of community engagement and spiritual care (Salinas 2025). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development acknowledges FBOs's unique capacities to fulfill social welfare purposes, particularly in community development and services to the homeless (Owens 2004).

Moreover, FBOs advocate for systemic change. The Theos Think Tank's report *The Church and Social Cohesion* outlines how churches build social cohesion by developing leadership and empowering neighborhoods to cultivate dignity and purpose (Theos 2020). Within the ecclesial community, acts of hope and service rooted in love lead to spiritual rejuvenation, fostering unity and revitalizing the body of the Church. When people witness the tangible embodiment of the Gospel, they are drawn to participate in Mass, resulting in improved attendance and greater parish engagement. In an era when the institutional Church is often viewed with distrust, the visible witness of clergy and laity in caring for those in need can rebuild the Church's public persona. These actions affirm believers's conviction that the Holy Spirit continues to work within the Church, positioning it as a herald of hope for a troubled world (Smith 2021, 112).

FBOs thus have a threefold impact: they address immediate needs, strive for systemic change, and renew the Church's credibility through visible witness. Their actions transform lives and contribute to societal rebuilding, demonstrating that faith remains vibrant and relevant (Ammerman 2020).

Every Christian is called to be a bearer of hope, embodying the Church's mission through daily witness. Pope Francis frequently describes believers as "missionaries of hope," emphasizing that Christian hope is not merely an interior disposition but a public vocation expressed through sacramental life, prayer, charity, and community engagement. These practices, while ordinary, constitute a theological response to despair and a lived enactment of the Gospel.

Participation in the Eucharist and other sacraments nurtures hope by anchoring believers in God's fidelity, as affirmed in Hebrews 10:23: "Let us hold

unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful." Prayer becomes a space where hope is "expressed and nourished," allowing individuals to entrust their anxieties to God and intercede for a world in need (Francis 2016). Acts of love and justice, whether through service to the poor, advocacy for the marginalized, or everyday gestures of compassion, manifest hope as a moral and theological virtue. As Pope Francis has noted, "The answer and the key to hope is love," suggesting that hope is inseparable from *caritas* in action.

Christian hope is also sustained and amplified within the community. Smith (2021) argues that fellowship and shared spiritual practices foster resilience and belonging, reminding believers that their journey is not solitary. In this context, personal witness becomes a theological act: sharing stories of faith amid suffering, offering encouragement, and living with visible joy are ways in which ordinary Christians embody the eschatological promise of the Gospel (1 Pet 3:15).

These expressions of hope, rooted in sacrament, prayer, charity, community, and witness, converge in the Jubilee Year's call to become "pilgrims of hope." They reflect not only personal piety but the Church's broader mission to proclaim, enact, and extend the hope of Christ to a world marked by fragmentation and longing (USCCB 2025).

In these diverse expressions, whether through sacramental life, grassroots ministry, global advocacy, or everyday acts of compassion, Christian hope reveals itself as a living force. It is not confined to theological abstraction or historical memory, but pulses through the Church's witness in every generation. As the Jubilee Year 2025 invites believers to become "pilgrims of hope," these signs affirm that the Church's mission is not only to proclaim the Gospel but to embody it, offering light in darkness, mercy in suffering, and renewal in a fractured world. Through such witness, Christian hope becomes not merely a virtue to profess, but a vocation to live.

6. CONCLUSION

Christian hope, as illuminated through the lens of the Jubilee Year 2025, is not merely a theological concept, it is a living force that reshapes hearts, communities, and societies. Rooted in the enduring virtue proclaimed by Christian teaching, this hope invites believers to engage the world with courage, compassion, and conviction.

The Jubilee Year stands as a sacred summons, not only to reflect, but to act. It calls the faithful to transform hope from a passive sentiment into a dynamic, embodied witness. In this time of renewal, we are invited to become agents of reconciliation, justice, and mercy, responding to the challenges of our age with unwavering faith and creative love.

Historically, Christian hope has animated movements for justice and healing, serving as a moral compass in times of crisis. Today, it continues to inspire faith-based initiatives and grassroots efforts that restore dignity, build solidarity, and proclaim the Gospel in action. Through institutional programs and personal acts of service, this hope becomes a tangible sign of God's presence in the world.

The Jubilee Year 2025 offers a unique opportunity to recommit ourselves to this mission. It is a clarion call to embody hope, not only in liturgical celebration, but in daily life. As believers, we are summoned to bear witness to the redeeming power of Christ by fostering communities of care, advocating for the marginalized, and cultivating peace in a fractured world.

In embracing the spirit of the Jubilee, we do more than commemorate a tradition, we participate in a living promise. By living out Christian hope with boldness and humility, we become pilgrims of hope, carrying the light of redemption to every corner of the earth. This is the Church's vocation in our time: to be a beacon of renewal, a sanctuary of mercy, and a herald of the Kingdom to come.

"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Gal 6:9), a promise that sustains every pilgrim of hope.

NADZIEJA CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKA A ROK JUBILEUSZOWY 2025. REFLEKSJE Z DOŚWIADCZENIA AMERYKAŃSKIEGO

Abstrakt

W niniejszym artykule przeanalizowano teologiczne podstawy i cele duszpasterskie Roku Jubileuszowego 2025 w kontekście amerykańskiego katolicyzmu. Przedstawiono w nim, w jaki sposób chrześcijańska nadzieja – oparta na miłosierdziu, sprawiedliwości i odnowie – ukształtowała życie religijne i zaangażowanie społeczne w Stanach Zjednoczonych, odwołując się do przykładów historycznych oraz wypowiedzi kluczowych postaci katolickich. W badaniu nakreślono proponowane w trakcie Roku Jubileuszowego sposoby ożywienia wspólnot wierzących, w tym pielgrzymki, działania w sieci i uczynki miłosierdzia, a także oceniono inicjatywy duszpasterskie Konferencji Biskupów Katolickich Stanów Zjednoczonych (USCCB). Wnioskiem jest stwierdzenie, że współczesne wyzwania, takie jak rany spowodowane kryzysem związanym z nadużyciami oraz wezwanie do zniesienia kary śmierci, dają Kościołowi decydującą szansę na urzeczywistnienie odnowionej i wiarygodnej chrześcijańskiej nadziei.

S ł o w a k l u c z o w e : nadzieja chrześcijańska, Rok Jubileuszowy 2025, doświadczenie amerykańskie, sprawiedliwość społeczna, pojednanie, aktywizm religijny, pielgrzymi nadziei, wiara i służba.

CHRISTIAN HOPE AND THE JUBILEE YEAR 2025: INSIGHTS FROM THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Abstract

This article examines the theological foundations and pastoral aims of the Jubilee Year 2025 within the American Catholic context. It analyzes how Christian hope, grounded in mercy, justice, and renewal, has shaped U.S. religious life and social engagement, drawing on historical examples and key Catholic contributors. The study outlines the Jubilee's proposed pathways for revitalizing faith communities, including pilgrimages, digital outreach, and works of mercy, and evaluates the USCCB's pastoral initiatives. It concludes that contemporary challenges, such as the wounds of the abuse crisis and the call to abolish the death penalty, present decisive opportunities for the Church to embody a renewed and credible Christian hope.

K e y w o r d s : Christian hope, Jubilee Year 2025, American experience, social justice, reconciliation, faith-based activism, Pilgrims of Hope, faith and service.

CHRISTLICHE HOFFNUNG UND DAS JUBILÄUMSJAHR 2025: EINBLICKE AUS DER AMERIKANISCHEN ERFAHRUNG

Abstrakt

In diesem Artikel werden die theologischen Grundlagen und pastoralen Ziele des Jubiläumsjahres 2025 im Kontext des amerikanischen Katholizismus analysiert. Es wird dargelegt, wie die christliche Hoffnung, die auf Barmherzigkeit, Gerechtigkeit und Erneuerung gründet, das religiöse Leben und das soziale Engagement in den Vereinigten Staaten geprägt hat, wobei auf historische Beispiele und Aussagen bedeutender katholischer Persönlichkeiten Bezug genommen wird. Die Studie skizziert die vom Jubiläumsjahr vorgeschlagenen Wege zur Belebung der Glaubensgemeinschaften, darunter Pilgerfahrten, Netzwerkaktivitäten und Werke der Barmherzigkeit, und bewertet die pastoralen Initiativen der Katholischen Bischofskonferenz der Vereinigten Staaten (USCCB). Die Schlussfolgerung lautet, dass die heutigen Herausforderungen, wie die durch die Missbrauchskrise verursachten Wunden und die Forderung nach der Abschaffung der Todesstrafe, der Kirche eine entscheidende Chance bieten, eine erneuerte und glaubwürdige christliche Hoffnung zu verwirklichen.

S c h l ü s s e l w o r t e : christliche Hoffnung, Jubiläumsjahr 2025, Erfahrungen in den USA, soziale Gerechtigkeit, Versöhnung, glaubensbasierter Aktivismus, Pilger der Hoffnung, Glaube und Dienst.

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