



Notes for *The Virtue of Hope II: Magnanimity Destroys Despair*  
presented by Sarah Colyn

This teaching considers how magnanimity -- greatness of soul -- protects hope from despair and empowers us to continue the journey of becoming. These notes outline the basic flow of the teaching and contain the full text and reference for each scripture and quotation shared. At the bottom of the notes are resources for further exploration of this topic.

### **Youthfulness**

God is “closer and more intimate to us than we are to ourselves,” and hope of fulfillment in Him “cannot be touched by aging or disappointment” (Pieper, *On Hope*, 42).

The youthfulness of Christ’s saints: aspiration that is at once both relaxed and disciplined; adaptability and readiness; strong-hearted freshness; resilient joy; steady perseverance in trust. Hope is the steadfast turning toward the true fulfillment of our nature.

### **Acedia and Despair, enemies of hope**

Acedia: “a sadness in view of the divine good in man” (Pieper, 52).

“One who is trapped in acedia has neither the courage nor the will to be as great as he really is. He would prefer to be less great in order thus to avoid the obligation of his greatness. Acedia is a perverted humility; it will not accept supernatural goods because they are, by their very nature, linked to a claim on him who receives them” (56).

The sorrow of acedia “lacks courage for the great things that are proper to the nature of the Christian” (55).

Despair: “It will turn out badly for us and for me myself.”

“It is not so much sin as despair that casts us into hell.” (St. John Chrysostom)

When an individual whose despair springs initially 'from weakness' comes 'to realize why he does not want to be himself, then it changes suddenly, and defiance steps in' (Kierkegaard quoted in Pieper, 61).

### **Magnanimity, Protection against Despair**

“A person is magnanimous if he has the courage to seek what is great and becomes worthy of it” (Pieper, 28).

“Despair [is destroyed] only by that clear-sighted magnanimity that courageously expects and has confidence in the greatness of its own nature and by the grace-filled impetus of the hope of eternal life” (60).

**Resources on this topic:**

Josef Pieper (1986), *On Hope*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco.

C. S. Lewis (1953), *The Silver Chair*, HarperTrophy, New York. Passage read in this video can be found on pages 180-182.

[“The Virtue of Hope”](#) live audio recording of lecture and prayer from an MPC school held in Wheaton, IL in 2019.