

“HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT”  
POPE FRANCIS REFLECTION FOR THE JUBILEE YEAR  
*GUIDED READING RESOURCE*  
**WEEK 5**

**Appeals for hope**

16. Echoing the age-old message of the prophets, the Jubilee reminds us that the goods of the earth are not destined for a privileged few, but for everyone. The rich must be generous and not avert their eyes from the faces of their brothers and sisters in need. Here I think especially of those who lack water and food: hunger is a scandal, an open wound on the body of our humanity, and it summons all of us to a serious examination of conscience. I renew my appeal that “with the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and favour development in the most impoverished countries, so that their citizens will not resort to violent or illusory situations, or have to leave their countries in order to seek a more dignified life”. [8]

Another heartfelt appeal that I would make in light of the coming Jubilee is directed to the more affluent nations. I ask that they acknowledge the gravity of so many of their past decisions and determine to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them. More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice. It is made all the more serious today by a new form of injustice which we increasingly recognize, namely, that “a true ‘ecological debt’ exists, particularly between the global North and South, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time”. [9] As sacred Scripture teaches, the earth is the Lord’s and all of us dwell

in it as “aliens and tenants” ( Lev 25:23). If we really wish to prepare a path to peace in our world, let us commit ourselves to remedying the remote causes of injustice, settling unjust and unpayable debts, and feeding the hungry.

17. The coming Jubilee Year will also coincide with a significant date for all Christians, namely, the 1700th anniversary of the celebration of the first great Ecumenical Council, that of Nicaea. It is worth noting that, from apostolic times, bishops have gathered on various occasions in order to discuss doctrinal questions and disciplinary matters. In the first centuries of Christianity, synods frequently took place in both East and West, showing the importance of ensuring the unity of God’s People and the faithful proclamation of the Gospel. The Jubilee can serve as an important occasion for giving concrete expression to this form of synodality, which the Christian community today considers increasingly necessary for responding to the urgent need for evangelization. All the baptized, with their respective charisms and ministries, are co-responsible for ensuring that manifold signs of hope bear witness to God’s presence in the world.

The Council of Nicaea sought to preserve the Church’s unity, which was seriously threatened by the denial of the full divinity of Jesus Christ and hence his consubstantiality with the Father. Some three hundred bishops took part, convoked at the behest of the Emperor Constantine; their first meeting took place in the Imperial Palace on 20 May 325. After various debates, by the grace of the Spirit they unanimously approved the Creed that we still recite each Sunday at the celebration of the Eucharist. The Council Fathers chose to begin that Creed by using for the first time the expression “ We believe”, [10] as a sign that all the Churches were in communion and that all Christians professed the same faith.

The Council of Nicaea was a milestone in the Church’s history. The celebration of its anniversary invites Christians to join in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity and in particular to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, “consubstantial with the Father”, [11] who revealed to us that mystery of love. At the same time, Nicaea represents a summons to all Churches and Ecclesial Communities to persevere on the path to visible unity and in the quest of finding ways to respond fully to the prayer of Jesus “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” ( Jn 17:21).

The Council of Nicaea also discussed the date of Easter. To this day, different approaches to this question prevent celebrating the fundamental event of our faith on the same day. Providentially, a common celebration will take place in the year 2025. May this serve as an appeal to all Christians, East and West, to take a decisive step forward towards unity around a common date for Easter. We do well to remind ourselves that many people, unaware of the controversies of the past, fail to understand how divisions in this regard can continue to exist.

### **Reflective Questions to help stimulate a conversation on the text.**

**1.What resonated or supported my own thinking?**

**2.What challenged my way of thinking?**

**3.What piqued my interest?**

**4. What questions do I have?**

**5. How has my understanding of hope changed by my reading of this text?**