



# Catholic Commentaries

by

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**2025**

[1-6-25](#)

“Let’s forget to hope” @ TheDialog.com

[5-16-25](#)

“Pope Leo XIV calls for a verbal disarmament” @ TheDialog.com

(January 6, 2025)

Yes, you read that title correctly! It does, however, need better punctuation to convey the proper meaning, which a saint with local ties can provide.

The Church has recently begun the celebration of [Jubilee 2025](#). The year of festivities takes up an ancient tradition of pardon and restoration, first highlighted in the Jewish biblical tradition (cf. Leviticus 25:8-13) and later inaugurated in the Christian era in the Holy Year of 1300. Celebrated every twenty-five years since 1470, the jubilee seeks to turn our collective attention to the Lord in a particular way so as to re-focus our faith on the great things the Lord has done and continues to do for us.



[“Hope does not disappoint”](#) is the central message proclaimed by Pope Francis for Jubilee 2025. In a world today where so many people can easily be “discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could bring them happiness,” an intentional focus on hope intends to offer an opportunity for renewal.

Learning to forget is one way to make that happen. This doesn’t mean denying reality, but choosing to embrace an even greater state of affairs. **ST. LEONIE AVIAT** (1844-1914), who co-founded the Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales and whose feast is celebrated January 10, exemplifies how to do that.



The Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales at Mount Aviat Academy in Elkton, MD

Completing her studies at the Visitation monastery in Troyes (Francis), where young girls from the countryside came to live and work in the town’s textile factories, young Leonie was affected by their plight. Fr. Louis Brisson, who had opened a center to keep these young people safe and also educate them in the faith, convinced Leonie to establish a religious congregation to continue this apostolic work.

On the day of her religious profession, the future saint made a resolution that would become her life’s motto: *to forget myself entirely*. She would do so as a matter of hope.

Leonie appropriated the understanding of hope lived and taught by St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), whose name she would take in religious life. The Doctor of the Church learned it through a powerful personal experience while he was a student in Paris.

After a time of despairing that he was pre-destined to eternal perdition, he came to understand hope as a faith-based conviction, more than a natural disposition, that exalts the goodness of life even without knowing what the future holds. His many writings encouraged hope not as the result of human accomplishment, but from an experience of the surpassing mercy of God.

In this sense, to forget (in order) to hope is to leave myself behind and commend myself entirely into the hands of divine providence. Even when temptation continues. Even where sin abounds. Even if discouragement follows. Even though suffering endures. Even with the apprehension and anxiety that cloud our perspective.

We can forget all that by choosing, instead, to remember the God in whom we believe: the Father who created us out of goodness and for goodness, the Son who redeemed us the sin that wounds our human nature, and the Holy Spirit who breathes within us and inclines us toward union with God forever.

In Salesian spirituality, hope arises from this understanding of who God is to us and for us. More than merely an optimistic outlook, this religious hope “gives inward direction and purpose to the life of believers,” as Pope Francis reminds us.

In this Jubilee year, we have the opportunity to redirect our lives by experiencing again the mercy of God that grounds our everyday hope. Through [pilgrimage](#) and prayer, we can come once more to know what the saints knew – that in the midst of all the contrary things happening around us (or within us), “hope does not disappoint, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).



St. Leonie Aviat’s apostolic work flowed from the hopeful resolution “to forget myself entirely.” As Pope John Paul II preached at her canonization, this self-forgetting in favor of God-remembering can also serve us as “an invitation to go against the current with respect to egoism and easy pleasures and open us up to the social and spiritual necessities of our time.”

Our time, our world needs hope, the Christian hope that does not disappoint.

As a new year begins and the Jubilee continues, let’s forget to hope; that is, let’s forget ourselves so as to hope in the one whose coming among us we just merrily celebrated, the Emmanuel who remains always with us.

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(May 15, 2025)

With [his first words](#) from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica – “Peace be with you all!” – Pope Leo XIV blessed the watching world with the same greeting by which the risen Lord encountered His disciples on that first Easter evening.



Speaking a few days later [to representatives of the media](#) from around the world who covered the events surrounding his election, the pope expressed in more poignant terms a way in which that peaceful wish can be fulfilled in our time.

“Let us disarm words,” he said, “and we will help to disarm the world.”

If that sounds far-fetched, consider the pope's reasoning. “Disarmed and disarming communication,” he explains, “allows us to share a different view of the world and to act in a manner consistent with our human dignity.”

That view of the world is one the newly elected Holy Father shares with his predecessor. In calling for a verbal disarmament, Pope Leo makes his own the message promulgated by Francis for this year's World Communications Day (to be celebrated on June 1). That [message](#) encourages all to “share with gentleness the hope that is in your hearts (cf. 1 Peter 3:15-16).”

As the great philosophers have argued, words are what distinguish humans from other animals. Words express our rationality. Words create our sociality.

Understood at this fundamental level, the disarmament desired by the new pope does not require a political treaty. It issues, instead, from a personal and interpersonal choice.

We know from experience that words can be weapons. Loud words communicate forcefully, as when screaming signals rage. Mean words communicate antagonism and aggression, often in the form of name-calling. Spiteful words communicate resentment and hatred, turning dialogue into diatribe.

Anyone on the receiving end of such words – whether heard or read – knows the pain words can cause.

To disarm such words is a simple process: just stop saying or sharing them! Convincing ourselves to do so is more complicated, for it requires a conversion of mind and heart and will.

The mind needs to be converted away from thinking rashly. That’s a challenge in a world where communication entails just one push of a “send” button. The mind needs time to move from impressions and perceptions to a consideration of what’s really happening, an appreciation of the truth of things and of the persons speaking about them.

The heart needs to be converted away from feeling angry. That’s a challenge in a world where communication arises from emotional reaction and gives free expression to instinctive feelings. The heart needs training in gentle restraint, by learning to assume the good in others, to see even those who disagree with us not as threats to our own well-being but as fellow travelers struggling along the same road of life.

The will needs to be converted away from choosing selfishly. That’s a challenge in a world of communication as competition, where one’s gain requires another’s loss. The will needs to decide to co-exist, to learn to forego its inclination to dominate or manipulate people, opting instead for peace as its first approach and bringing respect to every interaction, even in the midst of disagreement.

That threefold conversion, and the resultant disarmament of words, can happen when we embrace hope. More than just a wish or desire for what could be, greater than an optimistic outlook that breeds confident expectation, the hope envisioned and celebrated in this Jubilee year is primarily a virtue. It’s a cultivated attitude and practiced aptitude that gives inward direction and purpose to life.

In this sense, hope is ultimately our choice. It precedes communications, in terms of how we approach others. It informs communications, in terms of how we engage others. It results from communications, in the peace that we learn to share with others.

As the pope explained to the media, the path to peace “begins with each one of us: in the way we look at others, listen to others and speak about others. In this sense, the way we communicate is of fundamental importance: we must say ‘no’ to the war of words and images, we must reject the paradigm of war.”

In Pope Leo XIV, we already see a hopeful way of communicating that embodies his pacifying message. Despite the enormity of his new office, his visage remains serene, his sometimes wry smile exuding tranquility. It’s the look of one totally centered on God and determined to speak Good News to the world.

The new pope’s words deserve our attentive hearing.

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*“Share with gentleness the hope that is in your hearts”*



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CBS News Philadelphia



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National Reporter  
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**Fran Maier**  
Senior Fellow  
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for more info visit our website [scs.edu/foley-chair](https://scs.edu/foley-chair)

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