



Images Of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless

William F. Lynch S.J.

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Lynch says he bases the book on two assumptions. First, he believes whatever is ill with the mentally ill is human. Second, he says that the well can put off the impossible burden of trying to be as well as they think they must be, and can enjoy the privilege of getting tired and being a little mad! He focuses on three major aspects of hope: imagination, mutuality and wishing. He says hopelessness usually involves some constriction of the imagination. Without imagination to picture ways out of difficulties, we lose energy and become too apathetic to wish for anything. On the other hand, Lynch believes our society places all the burden for having and using imagination on the individual. "Half of hope," he says, "is help." On some of the most exciting pages of this book, Lynch describes the theological significance of our being able to wish. If what we want is not sinful or outside the realm of reality, Lynch believes God wants to communicate autonomy to us. Not understanding this can paralyze us. In the world of the mental patient, Lynch has seen a person agonize over making the "right" decision between a cup of coffee or a cup of tea. He shares the metaphor of a child who makes a toy that can operate on its own and shouts, "Look at it go!" He believes that God similarly exults in giving us the ability to make wishes and that "every wish, no matter how small, is a truly creative act." This book encourages the full use of our God-given powers of creative imagination to help both ourselves and each other.

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