



ALL THUNDER AND NO RAIN

By Mariano Di Vito, OFM Cap.

We can dismiss now the Mayan end of the world prophecy of 21 December 2012, as history dismissed that of 1975 of the Jehovah Witnesses and the “millennialism” of ten centuries ago. And perhaps now even the most impressionable of us can be finally convinced that: “Of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (*Mt 24, 36*), and all understand that it is necessary to always be ready, to be constantly vigilant, because no one knows the day on which the Lord will come (*cf. Mt 24, 42*).

So we must renew our journey. Divine mercy concedes to us another 365 days that can become further steps in that never ending quest for Christian perfection. Our efforts, in fact, because of the Year of the Faith that coincides with most of the solar year of 2013, can have an extra impetus.

These coming months are a good time for us to rediscover the first of the theological virtues and also the second which is directly related to the first, and that are so imperative to humanity today.

Indeed, “‘Hope’, in fact, is a key word in Biblical faith—so much so that in several passages the words ‘faith’ and ‘hope’ seem in-

terchangeable” (*Spe Salvi, 2*).

The effects of the economical crisis that sadly will not cease causing redundancy and suffering, as well as that still more harmful crisis of values witnessed everyday in our news media, risks undermining our capacity to see the future with optimism and stifling any enthusiasm in our activities.

This is certainly not the Christian approach. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us: “The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men’s activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity.” (*CCC, 1818*).

We too, from the pages of our magazine, will do our best throughout this year of 2013, to buoy up the faith and hope of our readers, broadening our themes with articles that include those social problems that we are traversing (unemployment, bankruptcy of businesses, the in-

crease in the cost of living, rising poverty), and looking to the practical wisdom of Padre Pio for inspiration, a mystic and man of prayer, who was able to find solutions to critical situations not dissimilar to our own although in another time of history.

The hospital “The Home for the Relief of Suffering” was not his only answer. The holy friar when he saw many youths outside the friary begging from the pilgrims because they could find no work, had the idea of creating, in the village of San Giovanni Rotondo, a Technical Institute, that could teach them different work skills.

To conclude these reflections, I wish to make my own and direct to all of you, an exhortation Padre Pio made to one of his spiritual children: “Believe and hope. With faith and hope you will arm yourself in order to sustain the struggle in which the heavenly Father’s goodness has involved you. With faith and hope, you will not be without the sweet nectar of love which unites you more and more to the Supreme Good” (*Letters III*).

These are my wishes to all of you at the beginning of this new year.