

# ***REFLECTIONS***

January 29, 2006

**Be strong and take heart,  
all you who hope in the LORD.**

*Psalms 31:24*

## **To Be Jiminy Cricket**

The Walt Disney animated movie, *Pinocchio*, was a favorite of mine as a child. I was warmed by his caring companion, Jiminy Cricket, frightened by his father's adventure into the belly of a whale, disciplined by his growing nose when he was untruthful, and inspired when his father's wish came true. But I am forever moved by the Academy Award winning song, *When You Wish Upon a Star*. I seem to never tire of the melody, and I seem to gain hope from its refrain.

It is interesting though that I find hope from a wish. A wish is a desire. We all have them. We wish for success, health, wealth, to be taller, or thinner, or better looking. Such was the nature of the wish that Pinocchio's father, Geppetto, made.

Hope on the other hand is a desire with an expectation. And it is that expectation that keeps us from despair. Just as cold is the absence of heat, and dark is the absence of light, despair is the absence of hope. We are in despair when we lose hope.

Now I don't think of Jiminy Cricket as an evangelist, but Jiminy Cricket sure knew where to find hope. He knew that hope was in the Star and he knew how to direct Geppetto's gaze toward it. When Geppetto went to his knees to pray for Pinocchio to become a real boy, a wish attached to an expectation and became hope.

Hope is one of our most essential blessings, and helping others find hope is one of the greatest gifts we can give. That is what Jiminy Cricket did for Geppetto. He was Pinocchio's constant companion who guided the little wooden puppet on a constant vigil to become a real boy and an answered prayer.

We are all called to be Jiminy Cricket. God calls us to be a blessing to others by directing their gaze toward hope. Directing their gaze is more than an encouragement or an act of human kindness. It is directing the gaze of others to the Star of our Lord and guiding them on a constant vigil toward an expectation that conquers despair. They will be strong and take heart for they will have hope.

*"You are the light of the world,"*

*Richard* +