



Catechesis for Families and Parishes

*"[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."
(1 Corinthians 13.7)*

Love hopes all things

The family has been called to be a **community of life and love**,ⁱ where a relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ, is fostered and becomes a source and witness of hope for the whole world. Even in the face of disillusionments, suffering and sorrows within our families, *"We must not let hope abandon us, because **God, with his love, walks with us. 'I hope, because God is beside me': we can all say this. Each one of us can say: 'I hope, I have hope, because God walks with me.' He walks and he holds my hand. God does not leave us to ourselves.***"ⁱⁱ This is why we can say with Saint Paul the Apostle, **"Love hopes all things."** We have hope that all things will work towards the good of our families, and through our families, the larger human family.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, **"Hope** is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of Heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit."ⁱⁱⁱ May our faith communities help our families deepen their desire for the Kingdom of Heaven and, relying on Christ's strength, become a witness of joyful faith, hope and love for our world.

Christian hope in families and communities

Christian hope takes root within a community of people.

"One does not learn to hope alone. No one learns to hope alone. It is impossible. Hope, to be nourished, necessarily needs a 'body', in which the various members support and revive each other. This means, then, that if we hope, it is because



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Family & Life Week
May 13-19, 2024 *Love hopes all things*

many of our brothers and sisters have taught us to hope and have kept our hope alive.^{iv}

What a beautiful reality it is that, united to Christ, we can help nourish hope in others.

Families are an essential community where hope is lived. By the example of parents and grandparents children learn what it means to hope. Family members, living in hope, nourish and support one another and, in turn, nourish and support hope in our world. One of the poverties of our time is the poverty of love. Many people within our communities experience an increased level of isolation and loneliness. Within our families we are called to reach out to individual members whose hope may be waning as they live through the challenges of life. As people of hope each family is summoned to reach out to others within their communities as a way of encouraging Christian hope.

Restore and renew the theological virtue of hope

*"You are fathers, mothers and children, grandparents, uncles and aunts. You are adults and children, young and old. **Each of you brings a different experience of family, but all of you have one hope and prayer: that God will bless and keep your families and all the families of the world.**"*^v

Within our families both the young and the old play a part in restoring and renewing the virtue of hope for one another, and together a family becomes a beacon of hope for the wider community.

A child is God's sign of hope. Each child, born or unborn, can spark a sense of hope for the future of our families and our Church. 'As long as there is life, there is hope'; and the opposite is also true: as long as there is hope, there is life."^{vi}

"Youth is a time full of hopes and dreams, stirred by the many beautiful things that enrich our lives..."^{vii} Pope Francis encourages youth to grow in



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their faith, to “see things in the light of hope,” and to share their spark of hope with others, especially their friends who are experiencing a time of darkness.^{viii}

Adults witness to the virtue of hope as they place their day-to-day joys and sorrows in the greater context of God’s divine will. Our Holy Father prays, **“May [God] give us the opportunity to live out Christian hope especially in the hidden martyrdom of performing our daily obligations well and with love.”^{ix}**

And the **elderly**, in sharing their lived experiences and stories, foster hope in the hearts of the younger generation and encourage them to place all their trust in the Lord. The stories of hope shared by the elderly allow others to see that if we allow Christ to journey with us, in hope, we will find peace, joy and love in our old age, and be ready for the Kingdom of Heaven. **Happy are those whose hope is in the Lord.^x**

Family prayer and the Sacraments as a source of hope

Prayer is a way of inviting Christ to dwell with in our hearts and homes. Fostering a life of prayer in our families deepens our awareness of God’s presence in our daily lives. When we allow God to guide us, we grow in our ability to choose the true, the good and the beautiful, which in turn makes us more open to receiving the gift of hope.

“Hope is nurtured by prayer. Prayer preserves and renews hope. It helps fan the spark of hope into flame.”^{xi}

“Baptism is the beginning of hope, that hope — of God, and we will be able to pass on to future generations the meaning of life.”^{xii}

Each Sacrament nourishes within us the life of Christ, the source of all hope. Through our reception of the Sacraments, we receive grace to walk this pilgrimage of life with hopeful expectation that Love awaits us in the Kingdom of Heaven.



The Holy Spirit – God’s breath of hope

“[T]he Holy Spirit does not only enable us to hope, but also to be sowers of hope...”^{xiii}

The Holy Spirit dwells in each Christian family, breathing hope into our daily family life and equipping us to become a light of hope for the world.

“[M]ore than anything else, we need the Spirit: He brings order to our frenzy. The Spirit is peace in the midst of restlessness, confidence in the midst of discouragement, joy in sadness, youth in aging, courage in the hour of trial. Amid the stormy currents of life, he lowers the anchor of hope.”^{xiv}

Each Christian family is called to be open to the life of the Holy Spirit, for **without the Holy Spirit one cannot have hope.**^{xv} Our faith communities are called to encourage families to become a conduit of the Holy Spirit and a source of faith, hope and love for all we encounter.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”^{xvi}

Each person is invited to re-read the catechesis and reflect on what resonates in his or her heart in a particular way.

Summary and key points for children

- God, with His love, walks with us. “I hope, because God is beside me.”
- No one learns to hope alone. ... We hope because our brothers and sisters have taught us to hope and have helped to keep our hope alive.
- Within our families, both young and old play a part in encouraging and renewing the virtue of hope for one another.



- Hope is nurtured by prayer and each Sacrament nourishes within us the life of Christ, the source of all hope.
- Each Christian family is called to be open to the life of the Holy Spirit, for without the Holy Spirit one cannot have hope.

Discussion questions for couples and families

- How do we, as a family, cultivate hope in our daily moments, whether in joyful times or in the face of challenges? What spiritual practices or family rituals can strengthen our hope? What new practices or rituals might we consider?
- How do we build stronger links between the different generations in our family? What teachings and memories do we share to nurture hope in the young and learn from the experiences of the old? How can we improve these?
- How do family prayer and participation in the Sacraments offer sources of hope for our family? How can we further integrate these spiritual practices into our family life to strengthen our relationship with God and with each other?





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Endnotes

- ⁱ cf. Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, “The Joy of Love.” 19 March 2016. n. 67.
- ⁱⁱ Pope Francis, “General Audience on Christian Hope,” part 1 (7 December 2016).
- ⁱⁱⁱ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1817.
- ^{iv} Pope Francis, “General Audience on Christian Hope,” part 10 (8 February 2017).
- ^v Pope Francis, “X World Meeting of Families Homily” (25 June 2022).
- ^{vi} Pope Francis, “General Audience on Christian Hope,” part 24 (31 May 2017).
- ^{vii} Pope Francis, “Message of the Holy Father Francis for the 38th World Youth Day” (14 November 2023).
- ^{viii} Ibid.
- ^{ix} Pope Francis, “General Audience on Christian Hope,” part 28 (28 June 28 2017).
- ^x cf. Psalm 146:5.
- ^{xi} Pope Francis, “Message of the Holy Father Francis for the 38th World Youth Day” (14 November 2023).
- ^{xii} Pope Francis, “General Audience on Christian Hope,” part 29 (2 August 2017).
- ^{xiii} Pope Francis, “General Audience on Christian Hope,” part 24 (31 May 2017).
- ^{xiv} Pope Francis, “Holy Mass on the Solemnity of Pentecost Homily” (9 February 2019).
- ^{xv} cf. Pope Francis, “General Audience on Christian Hope,” part 10 (8 February 2017).
- ^{xvi} Romans 15:13



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