

Teaching the Way of Love

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Circle of Virtue

Parenting with the Heart of Christ

Your family needs the virtue of Hope, now more than ever. There is no doubt that you are raising your family in tumultuous times. Confusion and chaos abound in both the culture and the Church. It would be easy to throw our hands up in despair and cry out, “Why even bother? What’s the use?” Yet, through all of this, the wisest voices are telling us to stay calm and to rely on God. This isn’t just a platitude. It’s great advice - for your own sanity and for the good of your family.

The virtue of Hope is one of the three theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity). These theological virtues are infused into our souls at Baptism. They directly empower us to have a relationship with God. Like any virtue, and any relationship, they need to be exercised if they are to be strengthened.

To exercise Hope means to trust God and in His promises regarding salvation. Practically, this means that we believe in God’s mercy and forgiveness when we repent of our sin through the Sacrament of Penance. It also means that we put our cares, worries, and needs into His capable hands through daily prayer. Trust in God also means accepting our present struggles because they may be part of God’s will for us.



How do you cultivate Hope within your family? For young children, Hope grows when the world is stable and safe. That is why children need their parents to make sense of the world. They need the security of knowing that someone is looking out for them. Parents are the most effective at doing this because children usually trust their parents first. If parents face the challenges of life with calm confidence, they communicate to their children that the world is in control. When children trust their parents, parents can then expand that trust to embrace God and His loving plan.

How well parents live in Hope also determines how older children handle life’s stresses and struggles. If parents freak out and show a lack of trust that God can make sense of things, their children are more likely to react the same way. Worse yet, they won’t see the value of placing their trust in God and peacefully accepting the trials they face. But if parents are drawing their strength from God, even if they visibly struggle through the trials, their children will see the value of abandoning themselves to the Divine Will.

Let’s be clear here. Jesus never promised any of His followers (this includes us) that He would protect them from trouble. Quite the contrary. Jesus promises us that we will experience trials, persecutions, and suffering. But He also promises that He will never leave us. He promises that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen us, and that if we take up our cross and follow Him, we will experience the Resurrection. The strongest

expression of Hope within our daily lives is called “abandonment to Divine Providence,” expressed in the Lord’s Prayer in the words, “Thy will be done.”

When we trust in God, we can navigate trials, confusion, uncertainty, and suffering with peace. Think of the joy with which the martyrs of the early Church met their death. They would often face the lion, the fire, or the sword singing joyful hymns. They weren’t expecting God to rescue them from martyrdom. They had firm hope in the Resurrection. One gospel song puts it really well: “I don’t know what the future holds, but I know Who holds the future!” As we face trials, confusion, uncertainty, and even suffering,

So how do you strengthen the virtue of Hope right now? Begin by meditating on and living the prayer below, adapted from the prayer by Saint Jane Frances De Chantal.

*O my loving God
I abandon myself forever to Your arms.
Whether gentle or severe,
lead me wherever You will;
I will not worry about the journey,
but keep my eyes fixed upon You,
my God, who guides me.
I resolve with the help of your grace to follow Your desires and Your commands,
without doubting because You lead me this way rather than that way;
but I will blindly follow You
according to Your Divine will,
without seeking my own inclinations.
Amen.*

This newsletter series is brought to you by Alice Heinzen and Jeff Arrowood, creators of Teaching the Way of Love. Teaching the Way of Love is designed to help you become a faithful, joyful and confident parent. Visit www.twl4parents.com for more strategies on how to become the best parent you can be. Consider becoming an annual member of the Teaching the Way of Love program. Members receive practical and timely parenting resources. Go to twl4parents.com/membership for more information.



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