

MAY – HOPE

Because love is filled with hope when it is communicated, our family wants to promote hope and the life-giving spirit that flows from it to our families.

Breaking Open the Theme

Christian hope is faith in the redemption of Jesus Christ that enables mankind to face the present, even when there are many problems. “The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life.”⁵⁷ But how exactly do such hopeful people live differently?

Hopeful people do not get weighed down by pessimism. They choose to counter discouragement by accepting the love of Christ every day through a robust prayer life. They believe “all things are possible” with God (Mt 19:26). They lovingly help their family and friends, realizing that life in its fullness consists in “being for others” even when the other is not affirming or loving in return.⁵⁸

Hope is born through encounters of love that present a life-giving spirit to our families. Families participate in the life-giving spirit of God through raising children, work, mission, generosity, tenderness and other acts of love. A hopeful family helps each person realize that they live “in the world for a purpose — to receive God’s love ourselves and to show God’s love to others. God seeks to heal a broken universe. He asks us to be his witnesses and helpers in that work.”⁵⁹

Meditation

From Pope Benedict XVI’s Spe Salvi

Whoever is moved by love begins to perceive what “life” really is. He begins to perceive the meaning of the word of hope that we encountered in the Baptismal Rite: from faith I await “eternal life” — the true life which, whole and unthreatened, in all its fullness, is simply life. Jesus, who said that he had come so that we might have life and have it in its fullness, in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10), has also explained to us what “life” means: “this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn 17:3). Life in its true sense is not something we have exclusively in or from ourselves: it is a relationship. And life in its totality is a relationship with him who is the source of life. If we are in relation with him who does not die, who is Life itself and Love itself, then we are in life. Then we “live.”⁶⁰

1. How would our family life be different if we did not love at all? How would this affect our sense of hope?
2. In what ways has the Catholic faith and God's love shown us how to love? In what way does the faith shape our hopes?
3. Why is having a relationship with God so important to really “living” and “hoping”?

Scripture Readings — Psalm 139:13-18

A prayer to the all-knowing and ever-present God

You formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother's womb.
I praise you, because I am wonderfully made;
wonderful are your works!
My very self you know.
My bones are not hidden from you,
When I was being made in secret,
fashioned in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw me unformed;
in your book all are written down;
my days were shaped, before one came to be.
How precious to me are your designs, O God;
how vast the sum of them!
Were I to count them, they would outnumber the sands;
when I complete them, still you are with me.

Family Project

Ask each person to choose something “impossible” to pray for this month, and choose one person in your family to pray for every day during the month. Also, to celebrate the life-giving spirit of your family, discuss times in your family's life when you grew together in faith or love. Discuss moments of your relationship, courtship, engagement and wedding celebrations that helped you grow as a couple. Share stories of your children's births, and discuss the gift that each of their lives has been to your family. Gather photos or various mementos of these events for a scrapbook or memory box that your family can cherish, or consider compiling them into a slideshow that can be shared with relatives.