

Virtues in Practice



Faith ♦ Hope ♦ Charity

PARENT GUIDE

VIRTUES FOR THE YEAR OF

Hope

September: **HOPE**

—trusting in God's loving plan

October: **STUDIOUSNESS**

—seeking knowledge to grow closer to Truth

November: **HUMILITY**

—accepting your limitations and God-given talents

December: **PATIENCE**

—waiting or enduring without complaint

January: **FIDELITY**

—being faithful to promises and commitments

February: **CHEERFULNESS**

—looking on the bright side

March: **TEMPERANCE**

—enjoying things in a proper, balanced way

April: **OBEDIENCE**

—saying "yes" to the loving will of God and those He has set over us

May: **DILIGENCE**

—doing your best and working hard until you're finished

INTRODUCTION TO THE YEAR OF HOPE

"We also exult in our tribulations, knowing that . . . hope does not disappoint." (Romans 5:3-5)

"Though He slay me, I will hope in Him." (Job 13:15)

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast." (Hebrews 6:19)

"So that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:7)

"[He] has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance . . . reserved in heaven for you . . . In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials . . . prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 3:9-13)

"I wait for the Lord, and in Him I hope." (Psalm 130)



The theological virtue of hope, given to us in baptism and strengthened as we grow in faith, is very different from the way we use the word "hope" in everyday language. Usually, we say "hope" when we mean "wish" or "want"; we say, "I hope you're doing well", "I hope I get this promotion". Christian hope does not mean a wish, but a *certainty*, a trust in God's promise that He has created us to be with Him in heaven.

The virtue of hope enables us to suffer with joy in this life, knowing that even when the things that happen to us are evil, the Lord will use them for our salvation. The virtue of hope reminds us that the sufferings of this life are short and small compared to the greatness of joy prepared for us in eternity. The Christian knows that places hope in wealth, in persons of power, in anything that is of this world is foolish, since these will all fail us at some point. God alone will never fail us, and heaven is the only world which shall not pass away. Therefore we anchor our hearts in heaven, and with that grounding, we can bear all the storms and trials of this life. Like a life-line anchored to a faraway shore, hope gives us the strength and direction we need to be continually pulled toward God, seeking the path He has planned for us in this life, recognizing that it is a journey toward eternal life with Him.

Hope also seeks God's plan for us in this life since we know that He loves each of us uniquely and has a particular plan for us to glorify Him and find our way to heaven. This provides an opportunity for the students to focus on discovering their talents, and strengthening these talents through practice, so that they are prepared for the vocation to which God calls them. Properly understanding the virtue of humility (accepting our limitations and God-given talents) allows children to discern the gifts God has given to each of them, and to rejoice in the gifts given to others. Virtues such as studiousness, temperance, obedience, and diligence provide opportuni-

ties to focus on developing study skills such as research, time management, following directions, and completing our work well—all within the framework of seeking God's will for us in this life, that we may join Him forever in heaven. The virtue of fidelity reminds children of this purpose, even in schoolwork; the virtue of patience allows them to make mistakes without giving up; and the virtue of cheerfulness reminds them not only to avoid taking themselves too seriously, but that God's command to "be perfect" is different from the common tendency toward perfectionism in our world. A sure sign that we are following God's plan and doing all our work for His glory and not our own is joy.

Our Catholic tradition cries out in gratitude to Jesus, our Redeemer, "*Ave Crux, Spes Unica!*" (Hail, cross, our only hope!), and to His Mother, "*Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve*" (Hail holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope). This year, we look to the cross and to Our Lady as signs of hope, knowing that the love of God triumphs over evil and that we have a Mother in heaven who will hold us close through life's sorrows, drawing us to rejoice at her side in eternity.