



In Brief:

ON CHRISTIAN HOPE

“It is important to know that I can always continue to hope, even if in my own life, or the historical period in which I am living, there seems to be nothing left to hope for. Only the certitude of hope that my own life and history in general, despite all failures, are held firm by the indestructible power of God’s Love, and that this gives them their meaning and importance, only this kind of hope can give the courage to act and to persevere.”

Pope Benedict XVI

Sacred Scripture:

“For You O Lord are my Hope... my trust is in You.

Psalm 146:5

“I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11

VIRTUE OF THE MONTH: HOPE

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

“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. ‘The Holy Spirit...He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by His grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life ’” (CCC 1817)

Note: Theological means that this gift comes from God and leads us back to God.

What is this virtue?

The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every person; it takes up the hopes that inspire our activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of Heaven. We receive the supernatural gift of hope in Baptism.

- The supernatural virtue of hope allows the possibility for Christians to trust in God. This grace is a gift of God, infused by Him.
- Hope has to do with things that seem difficult or impossible to receive, such as salvation. (See John 11:25-26)
- The gift of hope given by God never disappoints (cf. Romans 5:5).
- Hope tells us that God, Who promised us eternal salvation, will also give us the graces that we need for the journey to Heaven. He is faithful to His word, so we can put our trust in Him.
- Faith assists us to hope in God and His promise that He will always remain with us. Hope sustains us at all times, especially when feelings of discouragement or abandonment seem to overwhelm us.
- In addition, hope *keeps* us from discouragement.
- Hope opens up our heart in expectation of future blessings and eternal beatitude.
- Buoyed up by hope, we are preserved from turning inward in selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from living charity.

Why do we need the virtue of hope?

- God is almighty, merciful and good. The supernatural gift of hope helps us to trust in God’s promises, opening our heart to His mercy.
- Hope ensures the desire written on our heart by God to attain the glory of Heaven promised by God to those who love Him and do His will. We trust that God will give the grace we need to attain it.
- Hope leads us to persevere in prayer, even when all reason for hope seems absent. (cf. Romans 4:18-21).
- Hope offers to us joy and courage which sustains us in times of trial.
- Hope allows us to live, grow and persevere in faith.
- When we need the gift of hope, the most important thing we can do is ask for it: “The Lord hears the cry of the poor” (Psalm 34:6).

“It is only right and fitting to call the life of St. John Vianney a priestly and pastoral one in an outstanding way, because he spent more and more time in preaching the truths of religion and cleansing souls of the stain of sin as the years went by, and because he was mindful of the altar of God in each and every act of his sacred ministry!”

**SACERDOTII NOSTRI
PRIMORDIA**
ENCYCLICAL OF
POPE JOHN XXIII
ON ST. JOHN VIANNEY
AUGUST 1, 1959



Window

Christ the King Chapel

Hope Saint John Vianney



FAST FACTS

Also Known As:

Patron Saint of Priests
Patron Saint of Confessors

Feast Day:

August 4

As the reputation of this holy man of God spread, pilgrims began to seek him out, sometimes waiting days for him to hear their confession, heal their illnesses, and speak directly to their deepest needs.

His Life

- The French Revolution began when John was three. John’s parents sheltered priests in their home to protect them from deportation or execution.
- John made his First Communion in secret.
- John attended school for one year. He had difficulty memorizing and could not read.
- During his teenage years, the government permitted public celebration of the Mass.
- John enrolled at Abbe Charles Balley’s ‘presbytery school’ in Ecully at nineteen.
- At age twenty-three, John was drafted into Napoleon’s army.
- John was late when the draftees departed and although he tried to ‘catch up’ with the group, he was declared a deserter. He remained in hiding until the government declared amnesty for deserters and he returned to his studies at Ecully.
- Although John failed the seminary’s examination the Bishop gave an exemption to ordain ‘the most unlearned but the most devout seminarian’ at age twenty-nine.
- He became well-known as a great confessor.
- John was assigned as pastor in the village of Ars which had become indifferent to God.
- Through his sanctity, humility, kindness, gentleness, simplicity, patience and cheerfulness, John converted the village of Ars.
- John experienced attacks from Satan that were witnessed by others. On these occasions objects were thrown at him, he was dragged across the room, and other violent incidents occurred.
- John opened a school for poor girls which expanded to care for orphaned and abandoned children.
- John’s principal ministry was reconciling thousands of people to God primarily through his long hours in the confessional.
- For 15 hours each day, John listened to penitents. Toward the end of his life, eighty thousand came to see him each year. He stated, "I impose only a small penance on those who confess their sins properly; the rest I perform in their place."

How is St. John Vianney a model of hope?

- He continued to pursue ordination to the priesthood, even after failing the examination. St. John Vianney persevered in hope even though he often trembled from a conviction of his personal inadequacy.
- St. John wept for the sins of the penitents in confession and had the constant hope of seeing sinners turn back to God.
- With great kindness he devoted himself to restoring hope to the souls of repentant sinners "for God is quicker to forgive than a mother to snatch her child from the fire."

Practices to foster the growth of this virtue:

- Pray the Act of Hope each morning.
Act of Hope
O my God, relying on Thy infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.
- Make acts of hope. Example: When things are difficult, put your trust in God and have confidence in Him. Ask the Lord what act of hope He would like you to make.
- Name some people from the Bible or Saints who lived by hope.
- Read a book about a Saint and report to the class how this person lived in hope.
- As a class, read about a Saint and together discuss how this person lived in hope.
- Why does Christian hope have its origin in the hope of Abraham? (See CCC 1819; Genesis 17:4-8; Genesis 22:1-18; Romans 4:18)
- What are the sins against hope? (See CCC 2091-2092).
- Using the “Praying with Scripture” (Lectio Divina) prayer worksheet, pray ten minutes with a Scripture passage.
Psalm 139:1-18
- Think of someone who is ‘hope-filled.’ What does this person say or do that indicates that he/she is full of hope?
- How would someone know you are a person of hope?
- Read Matthew 4:7 How does this Scripture reading connect to the virtue of hope?
- How does inner joy and peace help identify a person of hope?
- The Psalms teach us to fix our hope in God. Read one of the following Psalms. Re-read the passage and choose a word or phrase that stood out for you. Discuss how the Psalm directs us to hope. Give citations to verify this statement.
Psalm 11 Psalm 16 Psalm 33 Psalm 42
Psalm 62 Psalm 71 Psalm 78 Psalm 119
Psalm 130 Psalm 131 Psalm 146 Psalm 147
- How is the Eucharist a pledge of hope of everlasting life? (See CCC 1405)
- Discuss how the virtue of hope helps us to live a Christian life.
- What does it mean to have hope in the future?
- What are the effects of hope?
See Index in the Catechism of the Catholic Church under the listing hope.
- How does the theological virtue of hope adapt us for our participation in God’s nature? (See CCC 1812).
- How is hope expressed and nourished in prayer, especially in the Our Father, the summary of everything that hope leads us to desire. (CCC 1820)
- Why is the first Commandment a source of hope? (See CCC 2086)
- The nature of hope is that we know that Christ has already won the victory and that we can participate in this victory of eternal life. How can we grow in the practice of living hope on a day to day basis?
- What supports us in hope? (See CCC 274. 1717, 1820, 2657)

Hope is the “sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.” (Hebrews 6:19).

Additional Resources:

Pre-School through Third Grade

- *Book of Saints, Super Heroes of God*, Part 4, Lovasik, Father Lawrence, S.V.D., Catholic Book Publishing Corp., Catholic Books and Gifts, (800) 228-4542.
- *St. John Vianney*, My Catholic Family DVD, 30 minutes, EWTN Global Catholic Network

Fourth Grade through Eighth Grade

- *The Curé of Ars – The Story of St. John Vianney, Patron Saint of Parish Priests*, Tan Books and Publishers, (800) 437-5876. (211 pages)
- *Saint John Vianney, A Priest for All People*, DeDomenico, Elizabeth Marie, FSP, Pauline Books and Media
- *Modern Saints, Their Lives and Faces*, Book Two, (12 pages) Ball, Ann, Tan Books and Publishers, (800) 437-5876. (211 pages)
- *Saints for Young Readers for Every Day*, Volume II, July – December, Wallace, Sister Susan FSP, Pauline Books and Media

Ninth Grade through Twelfth Grade

- *Modern Saints, Their Lives and Faces*, Book Two, (12 pages) Ball, Ann, Tan Books and Publishers, (800) 437-5876.
- *The Curé of Ars – The Story of St. John Vianney, Patron Saint of Parish Priests* Tan Books and Publishers, (800) 437-5876. (211 pages)
- *The Curé of Ars – The Priest Who Out-Talked the Devil*, Vision Books, Lomask, Milton, Ignatius Press, (800) 651-1531. (148 pages)
- *Saints of the Church, A Teacher's Guide to the Vision Books*, Allen, Michael G., Ignatius Press (800) 437-5876. (8 pages)
- *The Curé D'Ars Today*, Rutler, Father George, Ignatius Press (800) 437-5876.

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,
 - *Definition of Hope*, paragraphs 1817, 2090
 - *Eternal Life as Christian Hope*, paragraphs 1843
 - *Reasons for Christian Hope*, paragraphs 1681, 2785
 - *Theological Virtue of Hope*, paragraphs 1813, 1817-1821
- *The Virtue Driven Life*, Groeschel, Father Benedict J, C.F.R.
- *The Many Faces of Virtue*, DeMarco, Donald, 2000
- *The Heart of Virtue*, DeMarco, Donald, 1996
- *Back to Virtue*, Kreeft, Peter, 1986