

PARISHES OF SAINT MARY'S AND OUR LADY'S CUMBRAE, FAIRLIE, LARGS & SKELMORLIE



TEN REASONS TO HOPE AND TO STIR HOPE IN THE WORLD TODAY

As given by Pope Francis in the document
“Hope does not disappoint” (*Spes non confundit*)
with which he convoked the Jubilee Year of 2025

REASON NUMBER TWO:

“ENTHUSIASM FOR LIFE AND
A READINESS TO SHARE IT”
For your prayer, reflection and action
throughout February 2025

THE WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS

“Looking to the future with hope also entails having enthusiasm for life and a readiness to share it. Sadly, in many situations this is lacking. A first effect of this is the loss of the desire to transmit life. A number of countries are

experiencing an alarming decline in the birthrate as a result of today's frenetic pace, fears about the future, the lack of job security and adequate social policies, and social models whose agenda is dictated by the quest for profit rather than concern for relationships. In certain quarters, the tendency "to blame population growth, instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the [real] issues". [Laudato Sí, n.50]

Openness to life and responsible parenthood is the design that the Creator has implanted in the hearts and bodies of men and women, a mission that the Lord has entrusted to spouses and to their love. It is urgent that responsible legislation on the part of states be accompanied by the firm support of communities of believers and the entire civil community in all its components. For the desire of young people to give birth to new sons and daughters as a sign of the fruitfulness of their love ensures a future for every society. This is a matter of hope: it is born of hope and it generates hope.

Consequently, the Christian community should be at the forefront in pointing out the need for a social covenant to support and foster hope, one that is inclusive and not ideological, working for a future filled with the laughter of babies and children, in order to fill the empty cradles in so many parts of our world. All of us, however, need to recover the joy of living, since men and women, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26), cannot rest content with getting along one day at a time, settling for the here and now and seeking fulfilment in material realities alone. This leads to a narrow individualism and the loss of hope; it gives

rise to a sadness that lodges in the heart and brings forth fruits of discontent and intolerance.” (*Spes Non Confundit*, par.9)

REFLECTING ON THE POPE’S WORDS

Enthusiasm for Life. In all its forms, such enthusiasm and joy are based on hope for the future, on earth and in heaven: my own, that of my loved ones, that of humanity as such. The Pope is not talking about a *selfish* enthusiasm or a *calculated* enthusiasm, but an open-ended, welcoming, creative and pro-creative enthusiasm. The plummeting birthrate in Western culture suggests a crisis of hope, of selfless and self-giving hope.

The challenge to take concrete steps towards enthusiasm for life. Recover and refresh in myself real gratitude and joy for the gift of my own life, beyond any problems I may have. Wonder at the fact that I exist: why do I exist rather than not exist? Ask that I may have the caring heart of God for all life, no matter how fragile, tragic, insignificant or “useless” in the eyes of some. The intrinsic value of all life since it is given from the hand of God. Vigilance against playing the value of life off against other, lesser values, such as economic prosperity. If currently able to have children, my openness before God to what *He* desires of me/us as co-workers with Him in giving life to *His* children.

What else in the Pope’s words makes you reflect, pray, act?

FROM THE WORD OF GOD ON LIFE

Jeremiah 1:5: “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.”

Psalm 139:13-14: “You knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made.”

John 10:10: “I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance.”

John 11:26: “Whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

Genesis 1:22: “Go forth and multiply and fill the earth.”

FROM VATICAN II ON NEW LIFE

“God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes. All of these have a very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual members of a family, and on the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a whole. By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown. ... Through this union [the spouses] experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day. As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union and the good of the children impose total fidelity on the spouses and argue for an unbreakable oneness between them” (“*Gaudium et Spes*”, par. 48).

LET US PRAY

Lord of Life, you gave us earthly life as the pledge and hope of heavenly life. Give us also Your own joy that we are alive. Help us build a civilization of life. Inspire us to share life, to transmit, protect and enhance it until we reach its endless fullness in Your Kingdom of Life, Love, Grace and Peace. Amen.