

**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 FIVE:
“SIGNS OF HOPE ARE NEEDED FOR THE YOUNG”
**For your prayer, reflection and action
throughout May 2025**

THE WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS, RIP

“Signs of hope are also needed by those who are the very embodiment of hope, namely, the young. Sadly, they often see their dreams and aspirations frustrated. We must not disappoint them, for the future depends on their enthusiasm. It is gratifying to see the energy they demonstrate, for example, by rolling up their sleeves and volunteering to help when disasters strike and people are in need. Yet it is sad to see young people who are without hope, who face an uncertain and unpromising future, who lack employment or job security, or realistic prospects after finishing school. Without the hope that their dreams can

come true, they will inevitably grow discouraged and listless. Escaping into drugs, risk-taking and the pursuit of momentary pleasure does greater harm to them in particular, since it closes them to life's beauty and richness, and can lead to depression and even self-destructive actions. For this reason, the Jubilee should inspire the Church to make greater efforts to reach out to them. With renewed passion, let us demonstrate care and concern for adolescents, students and young couples, the rising generation. Let us draw close to the young, for they are the joy and hope of the Church and of the world!" (*Spes Non Confundit*, par.12).

REFLECTING ON THE POPE'S WORDS

It is striking that, on the one hand, the Pope describes the young as the "very embodiment of hope" and yet, on the other, lists different ways in which they don't have hope. It reminds me of the words of Jesus about salt: "if salt loses its taste, what can make it salty again?" (Matt. 5:13). If our young lose hope, what can make them hopeful and hope-filled again? What makes them lose hope? The Pope says "we must not disappoint them", probably referring to us adults! This is a call to adults to model values and goals which inspire the young with hope. The hope will be proportionate to the values: if they are only material or self-referential values (and they need these, too!), the hope will only last until death; if they are spiritual and Other-centred values (they need these the most!), the hope will never disappoint, even beyond death. We must model Christ to them.

The Jubilee must stir us to reach out to the young and provide them with reasons and means to hope. In St. Mary's parish we have the blessing of the "Youth Hub" which has been a real dynamo of outreach to P7-S3 children. Let's support it! But how do we reach our older teenagers and young adults? Most seem to have turned their back on religion or the Church: have they done so to God? Probably not, we can at least hope! What can we do to provide them with life-giving activities together with their peers and invite them to spend less time on their phones and screens and more time talking in real life to one another, laughing together, sharing and building dreams for themselves and each other? Have we adults become resigned to inner-worldly and mediocre goals for our young, possibly because we lack enough hope and zest and joy for life ourselves? Let us dream big and act boldly for them!

THE WORD OF GOD ON GIVING HOPE TO THE YOUNG

Mark 10:21 – “Jesus looked at the young man, loved him, and said to him, ‘There is one thing you lack: Go, sell everything you own and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.’”

1 Tim 4:12: “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

Matthew 19:14 – “Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’”

Psalms 103:5: By the Lord “your youth shall be renewed as the youth of an eagle.”

SAINTS WHO GIVE HOPE TO THE YOUNG

Saint John Bosco (1815-1888), who dedicated his life to helping young people, especially those living on the streets, by providing education, faith formation, and vocational training.

Blessed Hildegard Burjan (1883-1933), who was the first woman to study philosophy in Zurich and then to serve on the local council in Vienna. After experiencing a medical miracle and a spiritual conversion in her twenties, she founded the Catholic women’s organization *Caritas Socialis*, which worked to help endangered girls, unwed mothers and exploited female workers.

St. Maria Goretti (1890-1902), who at 12 gave up her life on this earth rather than sin against chastity. She placed her hope in Jesus to give her a better life, the life of heaven. We don’t need to be enslaved by sex, lust or any other pleasure. Young people are better than this, bigger than this.

Soon-To-Be-Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925), who was dedicated to Catholic social justice issues and, through prayer and devotion, dedicated himself to catering for the less fortunate. He is an example of a young person who gives rather than takes, to the point of heroism.

Blessed Chiara Badano (1971-1990), who stood out for her joy and dedication to God's will and, despite dying at age 18 of cancer, inspired many with her unshakeable faith in the midst of suffering.

Soon-To-Be-Saint Carlo Acutis (1991-2006), who simply made Jesus in the Eucharist the centre of his entire life, giving him enormous resources of joy, service to others, self-control and deep love for Mary, the Church and nature.

WORDS OF POPE ST. PAUL VI TO YOUTH

“It is in the name of God and of His Son, Jesus, that we exhort you to open your hearts to the dimensions of the world, to heed the appeal of your brothers and sisters, to place your youthful energies at their service. Fight against all egoism. Refuse to give free course to the instincts of violence and hatred which beget wars and all their train of miseries. Be generous, pure, respectful and sincere, and build in enthusiasm a better world than your elders had.

“The Church looks to you with confidence and with love. Rich with a long past ever living in her, and marching on toward human perfection in time and the ultimate destinies of history and of life, the Church is the real youth of the world. She possesses what constitutes the strength and the charm of youth, that is to say the ability to rejoice with what is beginning, to give oneself unreservedly, to renew one's self and to set out again for new conquests. Look upon the Church and you will find in her the face of Christ, the genuine, humble and wise Hero, the prophet of truth and love, the companion and friend of youth. It is in the name of Christ that we salute you, that we exhort and bless you.” (*Address to youth at the end of Vatican II, 08.12.1965*).

LET US PRAY

Lord Jesus, unfailing Hope of the young and holder of their real fulfilment and destiny, draw the hearts of our young people to the true and faithful Love of your own Heart. Shed your Light on their minds to understand that the good things You have given them in this life are nothing in comparison with You, their Giver. Let not science or ideology narrow their minds; let not self-will restrict their freedom; let not illusory attractions decoy their affections, sexuality and love away from true fulfilment in embracing Your will and way for them. Reveal to them the wonderful adventure of living life for You, the Sum Total of all fulfilment, realization and happiness. Amen.