

KEEPING WATCH ON THE ROAD: The Holy Spirit and the Hope of the Prodigal Son's Return



Why Do Children Leave the Faith?

- I. Intellectual Questions**
- II. Cultural Influences**
- III. Personal Wounds**
- IV. Moral Choices**
- V. Spiritual Neglect**

THE PRODIGAL SON (Luke 15:11-32)



The Prodigal Son's Return



St. Monica

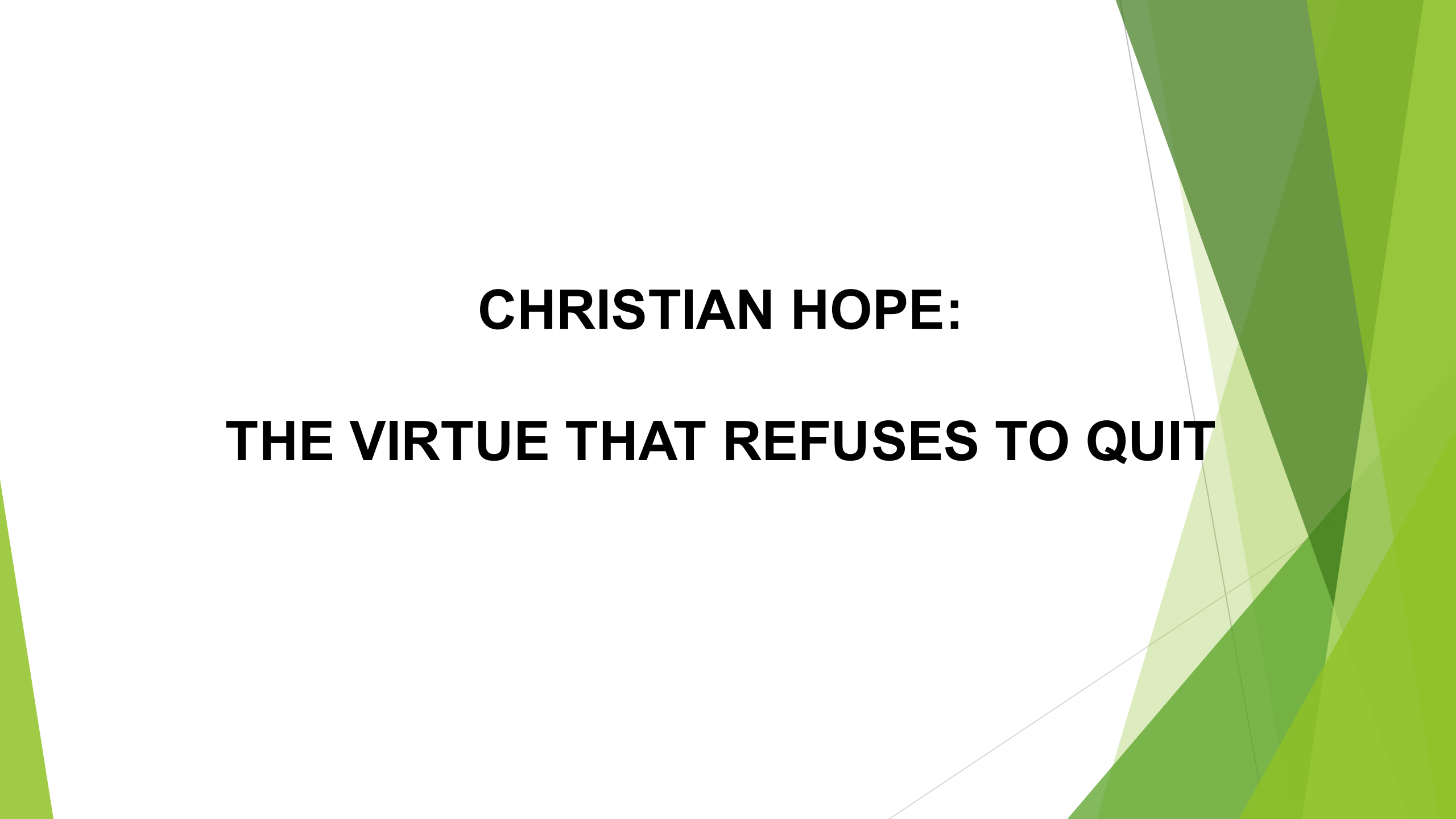


What Can Parents Do With the Pain They Carry?

1. The Holy Mass: We Ask Jesus to Transform our Pain into Prayer
2. The Eucharist: Our Strength for the Journey.
3. Eucharistic Adoration: We Learn to Wait with Jesus.

WHAT PARENTS CAN PRACTICALLY DO:

- 1. Pray Daily**
- 2. Love them without Ceasing**
- 3. Be a Joyful Witness**
- 4. Observe Fasting and Offer Sacrifices**
- 5. Entrust Them to the Blessed Mother**

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

CHRISTIAN HOPE: THE VIRTUE THAT REFUSES TO QUIT

Closing Prayer

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for Your unfailing love and mercy. Like the father in the Gospel, You never stop watching and waiting for Your children to return to You.

Lord Jesus, we place into Your Sacred Heart all our sons and daughters who have drifted from the faith. Protect them, guide them, and draw them ever closer to You.

Holy Spirit, fill us with Your peace, strengthen us when we are discouraged, and deepen our trust in Your hidden work. Help us to persevere in prayer, to remain faithful in the Eucharist, and to never lose hope in Your power to transform hearts.

Through the intercession of St. Monica and the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant us patience, courage, and steadfast faith as we entrust our loved ones to Your care.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Monica, pray for us.

Our Lady, Mother of Hope, pray for us.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SMALL GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS

(Choose one to reflect upon)

- 1. Like the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), what has been the greatest challenge for you in continuing to love, hope, and wait for a child or loved one who has drifted from the Catholic faith?**
- 2. How have you experienced the presence or action of the Holy Spirit during times of pain, disappointment, or uncertainty regarding your children's faith journey?**
- 3. Reflecting on the example of St. Monica, what helps you persevere in prayer and hope when you do not see immediate results? What practical step can you take this week to strengthen your trust in God?**

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

The father of the prodigal son never stopped watching the road, and St. Monica never stopped praying. As a parish community, how can we better support parents and families who are suffering because their children have left the practice of the Catholic faith, while continuing to trust in the work of the Holy Spirit?