

## JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE: CATHOLIC WOMEN OF AWKA DIOCESE LIVING OUT THE FAITH

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### Abstract

All baptized Christians are called to live out their faith in their various vocations in life. Undoubtedly, the content of the faith remains unchangeable, but the ways of living it out vary according to the different contexts of life. Such a duty demands constant witnessing to the faith in season and out of season. This call becomes even more pertinent in this Jubilee Year of Hope as proclaimed by Pope Francis. It is a time for inward reflection, but more especially a time of God's favour. The realization of that favour depends on how firmly faith is anchored in hope and manifested in charity. These three theological virtues stand as a tripod in which each leg is as important as the other in providing support. Thus, the virtues intermingle in their operation, and none functions in isolation. However, evidence often abounds of Catholic women breeding divisive tendencies that do untold disservice to what Catholic Women Organization stands for. Furthermore, there are obvious challenges confronting Catholic women in Awka Diocese in their efforts to bear eloquent testimony to the faith. Consequently, there is a need for proper investigation into these challenges in order to chart a new beginning founded on the hope of a better future. Using a qualitative method, the researcher consulted relevant literature to identify the fundamental elements of a Jubilee Year. This provided a basis for examining how Catholic women live out their faith in the everydayness of their lives, notwithstanding the challenges they face.

**Key words:** Jubilee Year, Faith, Hope, Catholic women, Awka Diocese

### Introduction

It is an obvious fact that women play a crucial role in contributing to the development and continual growth of the Catholic Church. They are formidable pillars of the Church. As an organization, the Catholic Women has a structure that covers different levels – National, Diocesan, Deanery, Parish, Zonal - which enables the organization to function effectively. The organization aims at the promotion of participation and enhancement of co-responsibility of Catholic Women not only in the work of evangelization but also in human development. Usually, membership is open to all Catholic women. Among the missions of the Awka Diocesan Catholic Women Organization is leading the members to imbibe the values and norms of the Catholic faith through retreats, conferences, and seminars (The Bye-law of Catholic Women Organization, Awka Diocese, Article II, 2.2.1). Through such gatherings, they deepen their knowledge of the content of the faith. It equally becomes more proper in a jubilee year.

On 9 May 2024 Pope Francis issued the Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025 titled, *Spes Non Confundit* ("Hope does not disappoint" Romans 5:5). Indeed, hope, together with faith and charity, go to express the heart of the Christian life and in their inseparable unity, hope is the virtue that, so to speak, gives inward direction and purpose to the life of believers." (Francis, *Hope does not disappoint*, n.18). It is only when we are rich in hope that we can bear credible and attractive witness to the faith and love that dwell in our hearts. In this way, our faith will be joyful and our charity enthusiastic. Then will each of us be able to offer a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed (n.18). It is based on this hope that Catholic women, as pilgrims of hope, try to update themselves on the need to bear eloquent testimony to our faith in season and out of season.

### 1. Jubilee: its basic understanding

The name "Jubilee," which is given to a particular year, derives from the Hebrew word *yobel* the ram's horn, which is the instrument used to proclaim the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). This (Jewish) holiday occurs every year, but it takes on special significance when it marks the beginning of a Jubilee year. We can find an early indication of it in the Bible: a Jubilee year was to be marked every 50 years, since this would be an "extra" year, one which would happen every seven weeks of seven years, i.e., every 49 years (cf. Leviticus 25:8-13). Even though it wasn't easy to organize, it was intended to be marked as a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation, and involved the forgiveness of debts, the return of misappropriated land, and a fallow period for the fields.

Quoting the prophet Isaiah, the Gospel of Luke describes Jesus' mission in this way: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord," (Luke 4:18-19; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2).

In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII called the first Jubilee, also known as a "Holy Year," since it is a time in which God's holiness transforms us. The frequency of Holy Years has changed over time: at first, they were celebrated every 100 years; later, in 1343 Pope Clement VI reduced the gap between Jubilees to every 50 years, and in 1470 Pope Paul II made it every 25 years. There have also been "extraordinary" Holy Years: for example, in 1933 Pope Pius XI chose to commemorate the 1900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Redemption, and in 2015 Pope Francis proclaimed the Year of Mercy as an extraordinary jubilee. (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo.html>)

## 2. Components of the Jubilee

Some essential constitutive elements of the jubilee are made manifest during its celebration. Such components

**Pilgrimage:** The jubilee calls for us to set out on a journey and to cross boundaries. Pilgrimage is an experience of conversion, of transforming one's very being to conform it to the holiness of God

(<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo/il-pellegrinaggio.html>). In the words of Francis (2015) "the practice of *pilgrimage* has a special place in the Holy Year, because it represents the journey each of us makes in this life. Life itself is a pilgrimage, and the human being is a *viator*, a pilgrim travelling along the road, making his way to the desired destination" (*Misericordiae vultus*, n.14).

**Holy Door:** It is the most powerful sign of the Jubilee, since the ultimate aim of the pilgrim is to pass through it. The opening of the door by the Pope constitutes the official beginning of the Holy Year. In crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, the pilgrim is reminded of the passage from chapter 10 of St John's gospel: "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture" (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo/porta-santa.html>). According to Francis (2015), "to pass through the Holy Door means to rediscover the infinite mercy of the Father who welcomes everyone and goes out personally to encounter each of them. It is he who seeks us! It is he who comes to encounter us.... In passing through the Holy Door, then, may we feel that *we ourselves are part of this mystery of love, of tenderness*." It must be noted that "by crossing the threshold of the Holy Door, we will find the strength to embrace God's mercy and dedicate ourselves to being merciful with others as the Father has been with us" (*Misericordiae vultus* n.14). "Jesus is the door that the merciful Father has opened in the midst of the world, in the midst of history, so that we can all return to him." Therefore, "do not be afraid! The Door is open, the door is wide open! There is no need to knock on the door. It is open." (*Urbi et Orbi* Message 2024)

**Reconciliation:** A Jubilee year is a sign of reconciliation because it establishes a "favorable time" (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:2) for conversion (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo/riconciliazione.html>). It therefore emphasizes the need to reconcile with God and neighbor through confession which allows us to receive the grace of forgiveness and spiritual renewal. This step equally prepares one for the reception of indulgence. We are called to put God at the center of our lives, growing toward Him and acknowledging His primacy. It is a time according to Francis (2016), when many want to be reconciled to God but don't know how to, or don't feel worthy, or don't want to admit it even to themselves. The Christian community can and should encourage the sincere return to God by those who feel His nostalgia. He insists that those in the ministry of reconciliation should serve as veritable instruments for the spreading of God's mercy. He further warns, let no one stay away from God because of obstacles created by man. Furthermore, Francis (2024) urges us: "Come! Let us be reconciled with God, and then we will be reconciled with ourselves and able to be reconciled with one another, even our enemies. God's mercy can do all things. It unties every knot; it tears down every wall of division; God's mercy dispels hatred and the spirit of revenge."

**Prayer:** There are many reasons and ways to pray, but at the root of prayer is always the desire to be open to God's presence and His offer of love. (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo/preghiera.html>) In the context of the Jubilee Year, one can dedicate more time to prayer, reflecting on our lives and seeking God's guidance. Reading the Bible, meditating, and participating in Eucharistic adoration are recommended practices during this time. (<https://catholicus.eu/en/what-is-a-jubilee-year-meaning-history-and-its-relevance-in-todays-spiritual-life/?pdf=1339>)

**Liturgy:** The liturgy is the public prayer of the Church: in the words of the Second Vatican Council, it is the "summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; (and,) at the same time it is the font from which all her power

flows” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n.10). At the centre is the Christian liturgy is the Mass - the Eucharistic celebration, where the Body and Blood of Christ are truly received (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo/liturgie.html>). In fact, the whole celebration of the Jubilee Year is expressed through liturgical activities, which is an expression of the life of the Church.

**Profession of Faith:** The profession of faith expresses the central content of the faith: it succinctly captures the main truths that a believer accepts and witnesses to on the day of his or her baptism and shares with the entire Christian community for the rest of his or her life. “To say the Creed with faith is to enter into communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and also with the whole Church which transmits the faith to us and in whose midst, we believe” (CCC 197). (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo/professione-di-fede.html>)

**Indulgence:** According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* “an indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints” (n.1471). The Jubilee Indulgence is a concrete manifestation of God’s mercy, which goes beyond and transforms the boundaries of human justice. The Jubilee indulgence allows us to free our hearts from the weight of sin because the reparation due for our sins is given freely and abundantly (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-delgiubileo/indulgenza.html>). Indulgence in the words of Francis (2024) “is a way of discovering the unlimited nature of God’s mercy. Not by chance, for the ancients, the terms ‘mercy’ and ‘indulgence’ were interchangeable, as expressions of the fullness of God’s forgiveness, which knows no bounds” (*Spes non confundit*, n.23). The Indulgence, therefore, is a Jubilee grace.

**Charity:** Charity is a principal characteristic of the Christian life. No one can think that pilgrimage and the celebration of the indulgence of the Jubilee can be reduced to a form of magical ritual, without knowing that it is a life of charity that gives them ultimate meaning. Charity, therefore, has its special place in the life of faith; moreover, in light of the Holy Year, Christian witness must be reaffirmed as a more expressive form of conversion. It is apparent, therefore, that no believer can claim to believe if they do not then love, and conversely, they cannot say they love if they do not believe. (<https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/giubileo-2025/segni-del-giubileo/carita.html>). In fact, living one’s faith with authenticity, being credible witnesses of the Gospel and communion are the steps that can help one be a prophet in our time and become signs of reconciliation and peace in the world marked by so many evils: wars, poverty, discrimination (Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life (2025), *Growing in Charity*. (<https://www.vitaconsacrata.va/en/news/eventi/jubilee-2025/growing-in-charity.html>).

### 3. Hope in the Church

According to Ihejirika (2024) anyone going on a journey must have a firm hope of reaching the destination. Hope is the driving force for people on a journey because it enables them to savor in anticipation of the delights awaiting them at the destination. Hope, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, “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” (CCC n. 1817). Abraham, our model of hope, listened to the voice of the Lord and obeyed it.

To walk together in the spirit of the synod, the symphony of voices must be listened to in the orchestra of synodality; each person must be listened to and given time to improve. Undoubtedly, the Church is actually the assembly convoked to give God thanks and glory like a choir, a harmonic reality which holds everything together. (International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, n.3 ).

To that effect, the different moments of the synod – Communion, Participation and Mission – have to be carried together and nobody should be jettisoned out of the boat; rather each person has to be guided to sing well in choir. These moments also have to be lived out in the life of the different Associations in the Church.

i. Communion ordinarily refers to common sharing, companionship; but for a Christian it has a deeper meaning of recognizing Jesus in the breaking of the bread and equally sharing it with others. If the breaking ends with oneself it negates what communion stands for. Communion abhors every kind of narrow-mindedness, exclusivity, egocentric and discriminatory attitude.

ii. Participation is all about one’s involvement and that of others. It cannot be a communion if I participate alone, and it cannot be participation if I end up in singing outside the choir. Others must be given the chance to enter. Nobody should be locked out.

iii. Mission entails listening and obeying the Words of Christ Himself who calls and sends. To go out of ourselves: our divisiveness and discriminatory attitudes, our arrogance and aggressiveness, our hate and violence; it must end up in fraternity, love, joy and peace. Difficulties may be there but you must walk on and work on. Never give up.

#### **4. Listening empowers faith and energizes hope**

The ongoing Synod on synodality emphasizes on “mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening is the key to all effective communication; and communication has a primacy of place in every synodal process. For Francis (2016),

communicating means sharing, and sharing demands listening and acceptance. Listening is much more than simply hearing.... Listening allows us to get things right, and not simply to be passive onlookers, users or consumers. Listening also means being able to share questions and doubts, to journey side by side, to banish all claims to absolute power and to put our abilities and gifts at the service of the common good. Listening is never easy. Many times it is easier to play deaf. Listening means paying attention, wanting to understand, to value, to respect and to ponder what the other person says. It involves a sort of martyrdom or self-sacrifice... Knowing how to listen is an immense grace, it is a gift which we need to ask for and then make every effort to practice. (*Message for the 50th World Communications Day.*)

Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood, if not entirely glossed over. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated. It is important to note that hearing is different from listening. Hearing refers to the sounds that enter one's ears and are equally perceived if the ears are functioning properly. It is a physical process that, provided you do not have any hearing problems, happens automatically. According to Francis (2016) “listening always requires the virtue of patience, together with the ability to allow oneself to be surprised by the truth.” Faith comes through hearing but one must listen in order to hear. Therefore, listening remains fundamental to faith; and faith is anchored in the undying hope of the resurrection.

#### **5. Officers of Catholic Women Organization: Listening with hope**

Catholic Women Organization, Nigeria (CWON) is the umbrella body of all the Catholic women in Nigeria. The body operates under the patronage of “Our Lady of Good Counsel.” The group has as its greeting “Through Mary our Mother, we succeed.” The vision of CWO is: “an umbrella organization where all members are light to the world and reflect love, unity and peace of the Kingdom of God.” Regarding its mission, the body “...is to rally and motivate members to utilize and harness their energy and resources for evangelization and transformation of society by fulfilling their roles in the family, Church, and society in the footsteps of Mary the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Cwonigeria.org, 2019).

The following are the aims and objectives of the CWO in Nigeria:

- i. To unite all Catholic women of Nigeria in purpose, direction and action in religious, educational, social, cultural and economic fields;
- ii. To unite all Catholic women of Nigeria and direct them for the purposes of love, light, unity, and peace amongst them and all people;
- iii. To give priority to the Christian formation of all members of the Catholic Women Organization Nigeria, through an emphasis on unity and a deeper understanding and participation in the life of the Church leading to a greater appreciation of the role of a Christian in today's world;
- iv. To serve as a medium through which the Catholic women of Nigeria may speak and act as a unit for the good of the Organization, our country and the world at large;
- v. To render assistance to Catholic women in their efforts to give service in their respective fields;
- vi. To encourage, establish and maintain inter-religious and intra-religious relationships with other religious organizations sharing similar or complimentary aims and objectives in Nigeria and abroad without compromising Catholic morals and values (Cwonigeria.org, 2019).

The Catholic Women Organization of Awka Diocese spreads from the Diocesan, Deanery, Parish, and Zonal levels. Like a chain, each part is as important as the other and no level is to be neglected. Therefore, adequate care has to be taken at each level by using the instrument of listening as tool of administration. In the parable of the vineyard workers (Matt. 20:1-16) that were sent out at different hours of the day, Jesus Christ listened to the one who murmured and addressed his concern. Not to listen to such murmurs and address them effectively, or treat them with levity no matter the form and dimension it takes will be totally contradictory to what collaborative administration stands for. It is necessary to remember that the labourers that were assumed earlier than others in that parable were presuming

themselves to be more just and worthy of privileged recompenses. Sequel to that, they murmured profusely against the owner of the vineyard for his generosity.

Interestingly, our Lord did not neglect the murmurs, rather he listened to them and gave a fatherly attention to them. Let us remember that in the administration of Catholic Women Organization at any level, no one should be ignored. For us to walk and work in the journey of hope it is important to listen. Any complaint has to be handled in a Christian manner through attentive listening. Each person counts. Listening promotes unity in diversity and, in the long run, engenders better progress. It is actually through listening and acting that Catholic Women become “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (Matt. 5:13,14). Being part of the People of God, they are therefore marked by characteristics that clearly distinguish them from all other religious, ethnic, political, or cultural groups found in history. Their mission is to be salt of the earth and light of the world. In this way, they become ‘a most sure seed of unity, hope, and salvation for the whole human race.’” (CCC, 782)

Let us always try to apply the St. Paul’s analogy in our various administrative set up:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.... Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable... (1Cor.12:13-22)

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” (Is. 40:31) Each one was responded to peculiarly. But there is also interior or tacit murmuring, which could be more devastating and could poison the synodal process and the disposition towards reconciliation with God and with one another. Such an inimical disposition could hamper communion and participation, and in the long run diminish the yielding of effective fruit.

## **6. Hope in Family: listening to understand and act**

The family is the garden where love, faith, and hope are nurtured. More so, it is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honour God, and make good use of freedom. Fundamentally, through family life, one is thrust into life in society (CCC, 2207). Indeed, “it is the family that takes each man and woman out of anonymity, and makes them conscious of their personal dignity, enriching them with deep human experiences. It is in the family that children are taught to hope, not minding the whirlwind of emotions that could exist with parents in their struggle to carry on with life and bring daily bread and sustenance to their children.

### **1. Hope amidst challenges in the family**

Women play a crucial role in the family. There is always the hope creating a better future for their children. They can combine different jobs in order to make ends meet. All of that is geared toward realizing their hope for their children. Unfortunately, many families face many challenges, including communication issues, addiction, abuse, and caring for a relation with a mental health issue, a wife that turns into the overall breadwinner (single married) or a husband abandoned by the wife or child helplessly abandoned in the highway of life. While these challenges can be difficult, there is hope for the families.

**i. Use of mobile phone:** Mothers must be all eyes on their children’s use of mobile phone. Don’t say that it doesn’t concern you. Let it concern you because it is ruining most of children today. Some of them don’t study again. They are the Gen Z group that are addicted to the use of phone. It is quite unfortunate that communication gadgets meant to help in connectivity is turning into the doom for many families. The famous scene of children sitting around their parents and grandparents to listen to value-packed stories has vanished. The young people have taken to various cybercrimes ranging from cyberbullying, addiction to pornography and Ponzi schemes. Christian values are speedily being eroded. Interpersonal relationships nurtured through conversation and dialogue between parents and their children, and siblings among themselves, is being replaced by online chatting and voice-messaging. Now they are victims of social media bombardment with a heap of conflicting information that leaves one not properly armed with critical thinking, totally misguided. According to Benedict XVI (2009),



the new digital technologies are, indeed, bringing about fundamental shifts in patterns of communication and human relationships. These changes are particularly evident among those young people who have grown up with the new technologies and are at home in a digital world that often seems quite foreign to those of us who, as adults, have had to learn to understand and appreciate the opportunities it has to offer for communications.

All hope is not lost. The digital environment needs to be evangelized. We must aim at communicating the truth, “we must first make sure that we are conveying truthful information, not only in creating content, but also in sharing it.

**ii. Get-rich-quick syndrome:** This is another ill-wind that is devastating our hope of educating responsible young people. It is founded on greed. People want to reap where they did not sow; unfortunately, some parents support them. Even secondary school students get involved in fraudulent investing scam which generates returns for earlier investors with money taken from later investors. This fraudulent investment scam has pushed many young people to abandon their education in the quest to make fraudulent wealth through digital financial services.

For hope to be restored on the young people, hard work, perseverance must be given a pride of place. As mothers and especially members of Catholic Women of Organization, the duty lies more on them. They need to make a serious effort and begin on time. *Na nwa m akaria m bu aghogho*. (That my child is stronger than I is deceit).

**iii. Social media marriages:** In the marriage process, preliminary investigation into the family background, the character, health position of the fiancé/fiancée before the contracting of marriage is being terribly eroded through the influence of social media. Nowadays, news abound of those who meet themselves through chatting in the social media. All of sudden, they propose to each other online even without seeing themselves for the first time. It is advisable for partners to go together for the genotype test and for the collection of the result in order to avoid bizarre stories. Some even get engaged with someone abroad with the hope that he will eventually make arrangement for her visa but all to no avail. Such speedy engagement most often collapses most speedily.

Young people have to be firmly guided in the process of marriage. Most often they confuse infatuation as love. All hope is not lost. While there is life, there is hope. Mothers must fight to see that this hope be nourished through proper use of reason.

**iv. The craze of Neopaganism:** Ezeokafor in his latest Lenten Pastoral 2025 made a reference to the ravaging effects of Neopaganism among our young people. According to him, the missionaries brought the gospel message to us and converted our forefathers from traditional religion to Christianity; and so was it handed down to us. Dishearteningly, today idolatry is assuming the centre stage in the name of reviving the culture of our forefathers. Consequently, many old and dilapidated shrines in some communities are being revived and adorned with white cloths. Many have gone back to the use of charms and frequenting of native doctors without qualms of conscience (*Never lose hope*, n.31). The fight against this ugly incident must begin from the families. Catholic women are therefore urged to have watchful eyes on their children in order to direct and guide them accordingly in the faith.

## **7. Catholic Women: living out the faith**

Faith comes through hearing, but must be lived out through love because “faith without good works is dead” (Jas. 2:17). Catholic women can live out their faith in various ways.

**i. Family prayer/sacraments:** “A family that prays together” says Patrick Peyton, “stays together.” As a domestic Church (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 11), the home is the place where children are trained. Parents have the responsibility to teach their children how to pray since “the Christian family is the first place for education in prayer” (CCC n. 2685). The character of a woman starts from home through prayer, attendance to Holy Masses and other sacraments. The active spiritual life of mothers as role models and exemplars who initiate prayer on the home front, is able to stir the love of God in their children. Mothers ought to be at the fore front of gathering the family together for prayer even when the “fathers” of the family are unwilling. Mothers must not take this role lightly. (Dyikuk, J.J. and Egielewa. P. E., 2020).

**ii. Nurturing godly children:** For parents raising godly kids remains their undying hope. Part of raising godly children is ensuring that they receive both civic and religious education as well as moral enlightenment which entail monitoring the kinds of content children surf on the internet. Young people are embodiment of hope. “We must not disappoint them, for the future depends on their enthusiasm.” (*Hope does not disappoint* n.12). Remember that they are the joy and hope of the family, the Church, and the society at large.

**iii. Being agents of peace in the family:** Peaceful families generate peaceful society. If families are at war, it will gradually begin to reflect in the society. If children do not respect their parents at home, there is the obvious tendency that they will likely not respect their teachers at school. It falls on Catholic Women to always strive to create peaceful atmosphere in the family. Difficulties in this regard could exist but don’t give up.

**iv. Speaking out:** Parents are majorly responsible for their children's behavior, be it good or bad. All parents have a responsibility when it comes to raising their children, for no one will do it for them. They have to brace up to their responsibility of guiding and speaking out vehemently when situations call for it. (<https://ivypanda.com/essays/should-parents-be-blamed-for-their-childs-behavior/> accessed 14/6/2025). In that vein, Edmund Burke is renowned for saying, "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men/women to do nothing." This goes a long way to challenge women/men never to keep silent when their children are getting corrupt especially in the recent time that there is the craze for *ego mbute* (quick money). Speak out when you see signs of cultism or other strange behaviours.

**v. Leading by example:** Catholic women have the responsibility of living by example. Do not neglect the sensitivity of your little children. They learn very easily especially bad behaviours. So, you must be very careful and cautious. When there is peace, the family actually turns from being a house to being a home.

**vi. Visiting the sick members:** "Signs of hope should also be shown to the *sick*, at home or in hospital. Their sufferings can be allayed by the closeness and affection of those who visit them. Works of mercy are also works of hope that give rise to immense gratitude." (Francis, *Spes non confundit* n.11). Let the members of the Catholic Women Organization not be useful only when they are healthy and then be abandoned when they get sick. Such attitude is neither human nor Christian.

### Conclusion

There is no doubt that prayer is an expression of hope, for it involves believing in the possibility of a desired outcome. Even in the face of hardship, prayer enlivens the hope of a better tomorrow. If our Lord and Master made it a habit to withdraw and pray, what about us, His followers? We did not call ourselves; He called us. We are not working for ourselves; we are working for Him. If we are truly working for Him and not for ourselves, we must follow His footsteps. We must allow Him to guide us. Therefore, we are urged to "rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

Hope is the anchor of our soul. The image of the anchor "helps us to recognize the stability and security that is ours amid the troubled waters of this life, provided we entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus. The storms that buffet us will never prevail, for we are firmly anchored in the hope born of grace, which enables us to live in Christ and to overcome sin, fear, and death" (*Hope Does Not Disappoint*, n. 25).

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