

Encouragement

“Be strong and of good courage; for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them; and you shall put them in possession of it. It is the Lord who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you.” **Dt 31:6.**

“Everyone helps his neighbor, and says to his brother, ‘Take courage!’” **Is 41:6.**

The disciples in the early Church, “strengthened the souls of others, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” **Acts 14: 22.**

“ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them; he who encourages in his encouragement.” **Rom 12:6-8.**

“The God of all encouragement, who encourages us in our every affliction, so that we may be able to encourage those who are in any affliction with the encouragement with which we ourselves are encouraged by God. For as Christ’s sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow. If we are afflicted, it is for your encouragement and salvation; if we are encouraged, it is for your encouragement, which enables you to endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is firm, for we know that as you share in the sufferings, you also share in the encouragement.” **2 Cor 1:3-7**

“Finally, brethren, we beseech and encourage you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, you do so more and more,” **1 Thes 4:1.**

“Encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” **1 Thes 5:11.**

“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching,” **2 Tim. 4:1.**

With these words the Holy Father invited all the witnesses to charity and the world of volunteers to participate at the Mass in St. Peter's Square noting that, " It will be an important occasion to express the Church's encouragement to those who devote themselves to their brothers and sisters in need and who are working to build a future of genuine peace in a society of greater brotherhood and solidarity." **Pope John Paul II, 25 APRIL, 1999.**

“Today it is often the laity who must be in the forefront in seeking to apply the Church's teaching to the ethical, moral and social questions which arise in their communities or at the national level. The specific mission of lay men and women is the evangelization of the family, of culture, and of social and political life. In this, they look to the Bishops for encouragement and leadership.”

Pope John Paul II to Irish Bishops, 1999.

“Offering encouragement is a concrete way of helping someone be faithful to a vocation. The laity and the ordained need to pray for one another and offer mutual support. Furthermore, the Church's pastoral ministry can be more effective if we become true collaborators, mindful of our weaknesses, but grateful for our gifts. Collaboration challenges us to understand that we are, in reality, joined in Christ's body, that we are not separate but interdependent.” **USCCB Called and Gifted the Third Millennium.**

“I encourage you to continue bearing joyful witness to Christ our Hope, our Risen Lord and Savior, who makes all things new and gives us life in abundance.” **Pope Benedict XVI on leaving the United States, April 20, 2008.**

"Do not be afraid to say 'yes' to Jesus, to find your joy in doing his will, giving yourself completely to the pursuit of holiness," **Pope Benedict XVI, July 20, 2008.**

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Encouragement is a spiritual gift in which a person urges, convinces and empowers others to be Jesus in their thoughts, actions and words. It involves witnessing to the goodness and correctness in others, supporting their decisions and ministries. Encouragement grows out of one's close relationship with God and the mind of Jesus. Encouragement is based on a strong spiritual life and way of thinking. It involves a prayer life and a wisdom helping others to do the right thing, the Jesus thing.

Questions to share

- 1. Which passage touches you or burns in your heart the most? Why?**
- 2. How have you exercised this gift in the past?**
- 3. How are you now exercising this gift in ministry?**
- 4. Do you see new ways you can exercise this ministry in the future?**