

# ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

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## Leaving.....

THE HOST APOSTOLATE  
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Recently a much-loved Priest of many years, left to go to a place where he would be cared for in a special way. There was no doubt at all that he would be sorely missed, and every person carried their own memories of their interaction and coming together. Wonderful things were said of him and there was a deep sadness as he bade all farewell. In all the gladness and gratitude for having had him as their priest for 14 years or more, there was also the pain of perhaps never seeing him again. Many silent tears were shed in the quietness of each heart and some not so silent or hidden.

The word 'leaving' came up time and time again including from him. It carried doubts and fears and many thoughts on all sides. But it was also the 'Word' for me from the Lord for this 'Encouragement'.

This made me think that leaving any situation for whatever reason has consequences for others. Sometimes people simply move to another area. Sometimes people leave for work purposes or a 'call' to be fulfilled. Other times it is just a temporary parting for a holiday, but in each situation, there are other people involved. When the leaving requires a life changing perspective then those left behind have to deal with a variety of emotions.

Leaving requires a recognition of change. One situation is exchanged for another one. How many mothers find the first days of a child's schooling so difficult ...The noise and chatter, even if sometime a little wearing, is suddenly absent and there is a real sense of lostness, of something never to be repeated. The same thing happens when young people move to colleges or work in other areas. While it may be acceptable it is still a change which has to be dealt with and recognised.

Illness can have the same effect for in other ways the

person has left while still present and this is very demanding of those around them.

Today, we have the problem of dementia which can produce a sense of loss with presence. Gentility and good humour can ease the situation, but sensitivity too must prevail.

Another issue of our times is the number of marriage breakdowns, separation and divorce. The pain of one person leaving who seemingly had made a commitment for life can be an unbearable pain. Clearly the circumstances differ and the reasons for the change, but the issue of having to deal with the absence of another person remains.



The deep difficulty in all these situations can be compared to a loss through death. Indeed, it is another 'little death.' But there is one fundamental difference and almost as painful. When a person dies and therefore 'leaves', we cannot ever see them again in this world. The difference between the two, even when the parting may be total, but with the reality of the person still being alive, but not necessarily accessible in a smaller or larger way... This is part of the pain as the longing reminds us that they have not 'gone' but that they are absent to us... This can cause a conflict in us which may be very painful and distressing. It is important to realise this when someone has just experienced this kind of loss and to treat them with kindness.

My mind and heart then turned to Jesus and the many ways that he left. How often did the Apostles and disciples have to deal with just such leavings. We have just had the pain of the 'Crucifixion' and so soon after, the Resurrection. We tend to concentrate on their fears and doubts but there is also the fact of their feelings and emotions being turned upside down. There is real danger of forgetting that they were flesh and blood and so much that was happening was inexplicable in every way.

**"Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal..."**

**Saint Thomas More**

He, Jesus, had left and then returned. But now He 'says' that He is leaving again but He will return but... that they will always have Him...

At this point let us just pause a few minutes and take this in....

What was going through the disciple's heart between the Resurrection and the Ascension? In a few short weeks we will celebrate the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven. What went through the minds and heart of his followers?

It is interesting that Jesus tried to forewarn them and that He allowed those last goodbyes. He let them witness His leaving on the mount as He ascended. I learnt how important that is when through no fault of anyone I could not make those final goodbyes with my brother who left for Canada, because of traffic delays and all I could do was see the plane leave and no certainty of seeing him again. But Jesus told them also that he would return at the end of time. Isn't that a teaching for us too, when we have to deal with separations of different types. We will one day be reunited with each other. Yes, a pain filled transitional time but with a promise of a better future.

Pentecost was indeed a gift, for in a special way they were given the gifts and insight to be able to deal with losing him once again. The bond that he had was a spiritual one with them. Yes, He ate and drank, walked, and talked with them but the bond was bound by other realities.

So too, for us... It is important that we make spiritual friendship. The bond between a priest and his parishioners must be such indeed. This is in fact the deepest bond. So also through the other Sacraments: In Marriage God is the third in that relationship. In the Eucharist Jesus is present.

This is put beautifully in the following...

***In order to be truly close to someone else, and to understand them on a deep level, it is necessary to speak continually and then share every detail of your mind and heart. NOT if both are intimately united with God, in that case, very little has to be said in order for each person to recognise a shared unity and to understand the other...***

***When God is alive in each person, it is His presence that unites them and enables them to know the other. This produces the blessing of a spiritual kinship which could never be attained in any other way, not even after years of constant talking and sharing. The unity that comes from a shared knowledge of God is far superior and far more effective in establishing a beautiful friendship than other means.***

***(Diary 768) St. Faustyna***

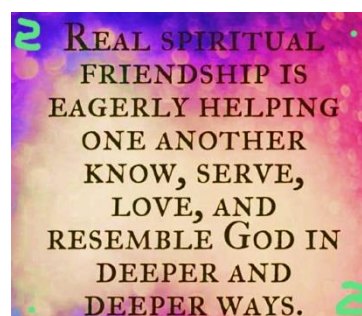
Surely separation then takes on another perspective and prayer binds and encourages us to look forward.

Halina Holman

### **Pope Francis**

“Renew hope, for hope speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfilment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love”

Rome 2021



### **Prayer**

Lord, I thank you for the gift of those people in my life who have a strong faith in You. Help me to rely upon those friendships and in them to discover your merciful heart. Help me also to be an instrument of mercy to all whom you have placed in my life. Lord you are my closest friend and bind us together.

### **Feast Days in May**

**1<sup>st</sup> St. Joseph the Worker**

**2<sup>nd</sup> St. Athanasius**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Ss. Philip & James, Apostles**

**4<sup>th</sup> The English Martyrs**

**7<sup>th</sup> Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**13<sup>th</sup> Our Lady of Fatima**

**14<sup>th</sup> Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**18<sup>th</sup> The Ascension of the Lord (Holyday of Obligation)**

**20<sup>th</sup> St. Bernadine of Siena**

**21<sup>st</sup> Seventh Sunday of Easter**

**25<sup>th</sup> St. Bede the Venerable**

**27<sup>th</sup> St. Augustine of Canterbury**

**28<sup>th</sup> Pentecost Sunday**

**29<sup>th</sup> Mary, Mother of the Church**

**31<sup>st</sup> The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**