

# ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT



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## Faith or Kindness



THE HOST APOSTOLATE  
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**A**dvent is the time of year that we set aside to reflect on the coming of Jesus into our world as a human being born of Mary in Bethlehem, totally human but also totally Divine. We think of the mystery that this is, and all the preparation throughout the centuries that brought this to fruition. We await the coming of Christmas with eager anticipation hoping for a time of Joy with family and friends, not forgetting our brothers and sisters in distant lands, for whom such a time may not be possible. We prepare in each part of the world in different ways, so that it becomes a time of celebration and witness to an unbelieving world. We busy ourselves with gifts and special food. We post cards and good wishes and party... But do we think of the deep significance of why we do all these things and to what effect?

Recently, a gentleman caught me while I was working and unable to divert my attention to his question. I could not stop what I was doing but heard his question, which is indeed the title of this Encouragement. Unable to discuss and answer at that moment I have been pondering the question which was 'what's the difference between Faith and Kindness?' I continued, and for a few days I thought, at first, of a simple answer, but that would not have sufficed, nor indeed satisfied him either. My first thought was that Faith is what we believe and 'think' of and Kindness is what we do as 'action.' One leads to the other.

Over the following weeks this developed into many areas of thought including Faith as opposed to Works, so oft quoted as if they were in opposition. Kindness, as something that people often substitute for being sufficient and greater than faith and indeed sufficient really to be considered a good person. I also realised that some people would not put these two together.

So, what is kindness? When people call someone kind, they usually mean that they are generous, tolerant and willing to be charitable. The dictionary adds to these, friendly, considerate, pleasant and agreeable. These are all good qualities in a person. Ordinarily these are qualities that we look for in a people. Sadly, perhaps they now go under the general heading of *Nice*. In recent times it seems that all that is required from a person is to be *Kind* and that is a measure of a person. They may only be nice to some people. They may only behave in this way when wanting to obtain something. They may not be so nice when there is a disagreement. It is interesting that we used to refer to groups of people as 'Mankind', meaning people, which says something of our understanding.

What about Faith? We can use this word in many ways too. Faith as in the belief in someone or something, so having faith in someone's ability to be able to do something or achieve something. In this way it is often used to encourage someone. But we also use the word to indicate that someone believes in something outside of themselves. We can say some one is faithful meaning true to something or someone. 'Faith in the spiritual realm means more than this. It says that someone believes, not just something, *but someone* who may not be provable as existing, or visible, but they have a deep belief that they do exist and guide them. Thus, a Christian believes that there is A God and that the Son of God was born in Bethlehem and will return one day, the Second coming. For a Christian this is vital to have faith, and it will bring us to eternal life because we have been redeemed by Jesus who was born and died for us.

Is it therefore sufficient to only have faith? Or is it more important too, as often thought today, to merely be a good person, a kind person...

**'Kindness is my only guiding star, in its light, I sail a straight route, I have my motto written on my sail: 'To live in love.'**

**St Thérèse of Lisieux**

Can a person simply believe and continue without service of any kind, or any expression of why we are called to live lives that indicate our Faith.

Recently we had 'World Kindness Day', in which we were supposed to be extra charitable to others. Should it not be always an outward expression of our faith? We are called to love one another as God loves us. A huge challenge of course. What does this kind of love require from us.

In the first instance it makes us put the other person first. Putting others before our own need often requires great sacrifice and dedication. It means ditching the wrong kind 'self-love' in favour of the needs of others. This can be witness not just in the extraordinary but in the ordinary lives of people. There are so many examples of this such as people looking after children or elderly, helping the sick and vulnerable, helping those less fortunate, those who do not seem lovable to others, and a myriad other examples. We learn of children who become a carer of their parent and sibling utterly selflessly. This is not simply being 'kind' but truly loving and putting the good of the other before one's own. Kindness has its limitations, but loving is a greater call and what Faith requires of us. If we have faith then the outpouring of our love and kindness stems from the source of all love, God himself.

Perhaps this can be seen in the most extreme, such as a willing to die for another person. We see this in the lives of martyrs over the centuries. Willingness to offer our lives in place of another surely is a great self-surrender. Recent years has seen many examples such as St Maximilian Kolbe, or the Blessed Ulma family as a whole. There are those who sacrifice themselves in 'belief' that cannot be denied even unto death. Such love lives in faith and shows its true colours. But how is this possible? Where can the strength to do this lie?

This is where faith and 'kindnesses' and Love merge. Without the love that God puts into our heart it is impossible. Of ourselves we fail too in that kind of love over and over again. But grace, the Holy Spirit is poured into our hearts if we are open to it. Without that grace our actions are limited. Our kindness is restricted and our love is imperfect. Without grace our actions will be flawed.

The hope that we have in faith encourages us to trust in God and let Him help us learn to be a little more loving, kind and gentle. Without faith we fail completely. Grace transforms us bit by bit so that we can love a little more perfectly. Even where faith is lacking, God is at work and transforming people even if they are not aware of it.

Bishop Robert Barron recently said that '*Faith expresses itself in Love.*' This is the link that we must follow. Maybe this Advent we can transform by Grace all our human kindness, into an action of Love.

Halina Holman ©

### Pope Leo

*'Love for the poor is hallmark of faith.'*

*'Dilexi Te'...I have loved you... First Exhortation  
Rome Oct. 2025*



*Christmas Blessings to all people wherever  
you live and have Hope.*

*Thank you for all your donations and help  
this past year... Halina*

### Feast Days in December

3<sup>rd</sup> St. Francis Xavier

4<sup>th</sup> St. John Damascene

6<sup>th</sup> St. Nicholas, Bishop

7<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Advent

8<sup>th</sup> The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

11<sup>th</sup> St. Pope Damasus

12<sup>th</sup> Our Lady of Guadalupe

13<sup>th</sup> St. Lucy

14<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday of Advent

21<sup>st</sup> Fourth Sunday of Advent

23<sup>rd</sup> St. John of Kanty

25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day - Holy Day of Obligation

26<sup>th</sup> St. Stephen

27<sup>th</sup> St. John, Apostle

28<sup>th</sup> The Feast of the Holy Family

29<sup>th</sup> St. Thomas à Becket

30<sup>th</sup> St. Eugene & Sixth Day of Christmas Octave

31<sup>st</sup> St. Pope Sylvester & Seventh Day of Christmas Octave