

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Encourage One Another" 2/15/23

Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Heb 10:24-25)

Marcus Aurelius wrote his book of philosophy, *Meditations*, to encourage himself. To better himself. To help himself learn more about what it meant to be a good man, a good ruler. As a Roman Emperor he appeared to have everything, he had it made. But did he? Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. He had a lot to battle – within himself and outside the city walls, in order to be a good man, a good emperor, in order to rule Rome well. How did he do it? One way was to better himself in all things, and he did it by looking at the good qualities of those around him, those he admired. He tried to better himself by following their examples. In his own words, “When you need encouragement, think of the qualities the people around you have: this one’s energy, that one’s modesty, another’s generosity, and so on. Nothing is as encouraging as when virtues are visibly embodied in the people around us, when we’re practically showered with them. It’s good to keep this in mind.”

It is encouraging for us to see how these virtues play out in the lives of others, and to instill them in our own lives, to discipline ourselves to be better people, to be the people we were created to be.

Is how we live, what we do and say, encouraging to others? In what way does the life of another challenge us to be better people. As others encouraged Marcus, he encouraged generations with his writings. How much more the life of Christ. How much more those whose lives were changed by Christ, who lived, wrote and died to spread the Good News. We have the writings of the prophets, the words of the good Kings, the servants, the followers and the leaders chosen by God, who spoke and still speak a word of truth to all people.

Paul tells the Thessalonians and us, God has done so much for us, “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up.” (1 Thess 5:11). We need each other, we learn from each other, we garner strength from others. God tells us to love and care for one another. This is good advice, take care of the other, we need them. This is good for the family, any organization, the church, the community, the country, the world. We need to care for each other because we need them - to exist, to accomplish, to enjoy, to succeed. We should never forget how important we are to each other.

“No man is an island,” John Donne wrote. No one stands alone. We need each other, we depend on each other for fellowship and support, for entertainment and protection. Together we accomplish, we find joy, we hope, we thrive.

We are church - together. It takes one’s gift of administration, their gift of help, and his gift of wisdom, and their gift of generosity, and her gift of music, and their gift of teaching, and her gift of preaching, and his gift of encouragement. We work together to be church.

We can’t hold our gift in a tight fist and expect others to be successful without it. We can’t say we don’t need that person. We should never think the church doesn’t need us. We can’t constantly put down another and expect the church to exist without their gifts. Instead of promoting ourselves, we need to encourage each other, lift them and their gifts up, acknowledging how much we need each other if we are to be Church in our community.

Please pray with me

Thank You, Lord, for those with whom You have placed me. Help me to be aware of how much I need those with whom I journey. Help me to appreciate and learn from them, help me to never forget to encourage them. May we make each other better. May we strengthen each other, reflecting Your love in all we say and do. **Amen.**