

# ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

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## Integrity...

THE HOST APOSTOLATE  
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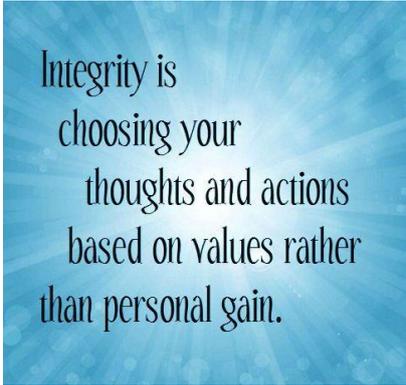
Anyone who lives in today's world will be faced with the issue of integrity and truth. In every political sphere there are debates about the truthfulness of statements expressed, questions about them, and debates as to who to believe. It is a matter of deep regret that these issues are debated so much and that there seems to be a shortage of truth and transparency in public life and that this touches the Church too. More worrying is the fact that this has caused people not to trust anyone about anything and therefore this undermines the very notion of leadership and most of all **integrity**. It has almost become a reality that people who lead, lie about things, in order to maintain position or get through agendas. Very often it is heard 'oh well they are a politician', so saying that they all speak in order to achieve power and not about being honest or being a servant.

This is even more serious when things are discussed debating church matters and the very issue divides groups of people, not just about truth and beliefs but also about the integrity of what is believed and where it comes from...

As Christians we have a duty to be honest and truthful and not lie about anything or use deception in order to get a point across. It is true that there are very few people who have not at some time lied in order to get themselves out of a mistake or rash judgement...but it has to be remembered that while it occurs it is always regrettable, and apologies should be made. Jesus forgave St. Peter for denying that he even knew Jesus and gave him a chance to put the matter right. Indeed, even misleading people, even unintentionally, should be and can be put right if a genuine error has been made that might harm or blind another person to the truth. Is it not one of the Ten Commandments that we must not 'bear false witness about our neighbour'? There is a beautiful

reply given by the widow of Zarephath to Elijah that underpins why integrity is so important. In response to her doubt Elijah the Prophet, reveals to her that what he said was true. And she replied, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord from your mouth is the truth." (*1 Kings 17:24*)

So what is integrity? The definition of it is: 'the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles' or 'a state of being unified' (Oxford Dictionary). In these days this evaluation is rarely applied to anyone, and it is almost a slur to say someone has strong moral values. It is almost an



Integrity is  
choosing your  
thoughts and actions  
based on values rather  
than personal gain.

abusive term implying inflexibility of attitudes. Having true integrity is rarely used as a description of someone. The second definition is well applied with the first as stating that the person has no complicated and opposing views within themselves or that the inner self is like the external. Put another way, that their words, and actions, are at one, and that there is no hypocrisy. So

who can be defined as having true integrity? We can perhaps all think of one person or two maybe, but there are people great and small who manifest this trait.

A lovely moment can be taken from the Gospel...it is the story of Nathaniel. (John 1:43-47) 'The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Beth-sa'ida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathan'a-el, and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathan'a-el said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathan'a-el coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile". The name itself means 'God has Given'.

**"The Nation doesn't simply need what we have. It needs what we are." St. Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein)**

In saying that there was no guile in Nathanael Jesus meant that he was entirely without pretence or hypocrisy. There was 'no side to him', as the saying goes. Nathanael was the type of man who really meant what he said and said what he meant. He did not have hidden agendas or ulterior purposes. If he wanted something he would openly and honestly say what he wanted and why. He would not trick or manipulate people. Neither would he use anybody. Above all, being without guile means that we are ruthlessly honest with ourselves and about ourselves. A guileless person, when he reads about certain sins or faults in the saying of Jesus or hears them spoken of in a sermon or homily, readily accepts that those sins are to be found in himself and applies them first to himself. (Referenced from 'Real Christianity')

Another person who had integrity was Nicodemus. While highly educated, a Pharisee, he did not accept what others said of Jesus but sought the truth from Jesus, asking very direct and straightforward questions. In the end, he gave his own tomb for Jesus' burial. The Samaritan woman at the Well in Sychar also showed integrity and realised that Jesus spoke the truth and acknowledged her position as having been married many times but was open to a complete change of heart bringing others to believe.

We also have examples from History such as the many Saints who would rather die than accept falsehood or deny their faith. Some like St. Thomas More preferred loss of power and position rather than compromise their belief and principles. Courage and integrity often have to sit side by side as they often challenge the 'status quo' and confront others with the truth.

We have people like that today too... We could mention St. Oscar Romero or Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa of Calcutta... or Nelson Mandela. Indeed prophetic gifts are often allied to integrity as if words come from the Lord they are intrinsically from the Truth. These qualities can obviously be found in particular spheres of public life from the...



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Arts to Medicine - Science to Sport and even though restricted to maybe one 'issue' or 'sphere' they give us an inspired lead.

We all like to believe that we are trustworthy, honest and people of our word and practice and 'so called put together'. But are we really? Can it be said of us that we have 'no guile'. Or that we have total integrity and can be trusted in all situations. Are we the type of people who search for the truth and do not spread gossip or always seek and ponder before or how to act? Are we willing to stand up for that truth once found or willing to accept that we were wrong? Surely it is very important to do this in our times when so much is at stake on so many levels.

Halina Holman

### Pope Francis

*The Gospel calls individual Christians to live lives of honesty, integrity and concern for the common good... to create circles of integrity... networks of solidarity which can expand to embrace.* Rome 2016

*Be men and women with others and for others: true champions at the service of others.* Rome 2013

"Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought."

St. Pope John Paul II



### Feast Days in July

1<sup>st</sup> St. Oliver Plunkett

3<sup>rd</sup> Fourteenth Sunday in Ord. T.

4<sup>th</sup> St. Elizabeth of Portugal

5<sup>th</sup> St. Anthony Zaccaria

6<sup>th</sup> St. Maria Goretti

9<sup>th</sup> St. Augustine Zhao Rong & Companions

10<sup>th</sup> Fifteenth Sunday in Ord. T.

11<sup>th</sup> St. Benedict, Patron of Europe

15<sup>th</sup> St. Bonaventure

16<sup>th</sup> Our Lady of Mount Carmel

17<sup>th</sup> Sixteenth Sunday in Ord. T.

22<sup>nd</sup> St. Mary Magdelene

23<sup>rd</sup> St. Bridget of Sweden, Patron of Europe

24<sup>th</sup> Seventeenth Sunday in Ord. T.

25<sup>th</sup> St. James, Apostle

26<sup>th</sup> Ss. Anna & Joachim, parents of Our Lady

29<sup>th</sup> Ss. Martha, Mary & Lazarus

31<sup>st</sup> Eighteenth Sunday in Ord. T.

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