

BARNABAS: GIFT OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Barnabas was one of the most amiable and life-promoting of the early Christians. Luke calls him “*a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.*” Barnabas was admired for his gift of animating others. A trusted confidant of many, he shared much of his property with the poor, and it was he who helped the former persecutor, Saul/Paul, to gain entry to the Christian community in Jerusalem. His given name was Josef, but *Barnabas* was added as a nickname which means “son of encouragement.” As portrayed in Acts, Barnabas had the sort of unselfish, encouraging personality that made him a great ambassador for the Gospel. He was the perfect delegate to be sent by the apostles to support the growing church in Antioch. Something powerful and new was stirring within the Christian community in Antioch. In that city the gospel had for the first time been preached to *pagans* as well as Jews and therefore a new kind of church was emerging there, a group that included members of Jewish and non-Jewish background.

God is always at work in new and creative ways among us and let us recognize divine inspiration in our parish community of St Joseph’s and celebrate and encourage its effects.

Fr Naz, 11/6/2020