

Thanksgiving is an Act of Faith!

At the center of today's readings is the invitation St. James gives us in the 2nd reading to make our faith active, that is, for us to have faith that shows itself both in words and actions. Through our liturgy, we celebrate our faith, through the Creed, we profess our faith, through our prayers and songs, we express our faith, and through our lives, we live out our faith. Faith can never be passive, but it shows itself in our actions and reactions to things of life. St. James emphasizes that our expressions of faith must go with the right actions. Thus, he stated, "Faith without good works is dead."

Our recognition of the presence of God in our lives through thanksgiving is an act of faith. Faith helps us to know that whatever we have received makes us gifts to other people. Hence, an invitation for us, the Nigerian Igbo Catholic Community, as we gather this weekend with our friends to celebrate our 2021 Thanksgiving, Harvest, and Bazaar with the theme- *Yes I Believe, Harvest of Divine Intervention*. This theme invites us to affirm our faith individually and recognize in different ways God has intervened in our lives, especially during this time of Covid 19 fears, anxieties, and challenges.

In addition, Jesus invites us in today's gospel to take up our cross and follow him. It is an act of faith, an ability to feel his presence in our day-to-day challenges, struggles, and sufferings. Life will never be free of crosses, and the cross of our lives is the cross of our salvation. Our acts of thanksgiving help us to know that God is with us always, and he is always there to help us carry the cross of our lives. Let us ask the good Lord that the faith we celebrate, profess, and express will continue to manifest in our lives, especially in our gratitude to God for the gifts we have received. Amen.

"Each person should give as one has determined in one's heart; not grudgingly, or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).