

— God of Encouragement —

While you are gathering, sing *Yesuve saranam* (59) with a cantor, and everyone else repeating each phrase. As you sing this Indian song, feel solidarity with Christians in other continents.

Silence Make yourself aware of the different parts of your body, and relax them, one by one. Concentrate on the present moment; remember that it is held in being by God, and surrender to him your whole self.

Leader 'Fear not, little flock,
it is the Father's good pleasure
to give you the Kingdom.'

All Lord, we thank you that time and again
you encourage us on our journey.

Leader Whenever weakness overtakes us,

Men whenever your will seems blocked,

Women whenever the next step looks treacherous,

All whenever we reach the limits
of our resources;

Leader then you encourage and strengthen
our resolve,

Men you show us that with you
all things are possible,

Women you support us during the difficult moves,

All and provide for our every need.

Leader Oh Lord, our God,

All without your encouragement
we would so often give up;
we thank you for empowering us
to work for the coming of your Kingdom.

Sing *Lord of my life* (32)

Silence Think over the times God has given you encouragement at low points of your life - through a friendship, or words spoken, or a particular event, or an experience of his presence in prayer. Thank God for such personal loving care.

Leader Listen now to these words
of encouragement from Luke's Gospel.

Reading Luke 12. 22-32

Leader This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Sing *Nada te turbe* (39)

Leader Knowing that our heavenly Father
loves and cares for all he has created,
let us pray to him now...
For those who are feeling discouraged,
and those who are experiencing failure.

Silence

All Lord, give them your encouragement.

Leader For those who are wary
of stepping out in faith.

Silence

All Lord, give them your encouragement.

Leader For those whose self-esteem is low,
and those who are despised.

Silence

All Lord, give them your encouragement.

Leader For those weakened
by lives which are burdened
with crisis after crisis.

Silence

All Lord, give them your encouragement.

Leader Lord, you have promised us

All that you will be with us always,
to the end of the world.

With that promise to encourage us
in every situation,
may we walk your way with joy,
and infect the world with hope. Amen.

Sing *You shall go out with joy* (60)

Finish with a shared Peace.