

As a member of the Campus Ministry class, I personally had the opportunity to help decide the ministry theme for this year: “Be Not Afraid.” This phrase is familiar to many of us. Whether you heard it in the Old and New Testament, or from a famous saint such as St. Pope John Paul II, each and every person encounters this theme differently.

Personally, I struggle with realizing when I am stressing myself out. Whether that is in school or work, I tend to get stressed. Whenever I come to that realization, I tend to shut down. However, I see this theme as a way to give God my struggles and to not be afraid or worried of His plan for me. As humans, we tend to shove our worries down and suppress them until we no longer can do so. It is not only unhealthy, but it is not what God wants us to. Our struggles and worries are to be lifted up to Him on a daily basis. By doing so, we may be not afraid of our own struggles and worries, because it is He who is lifting us up and is in control.

I interviewed a few Campus Ministers to get other perspectives about our theme. Here is what they had to say:

Our vision statement this year, “Be Not Afraid” doesn’t have a definition. To me “Be Not Afraid” is what you make it to be. It is a reminder to everyone that no matter what personal struggles you’re going through you are not alone. When you allow the Holy Spirit to enter into your heart and give you courage, you will be fortuitous in your actions. Be not afraid speaks to me personally. We are not alone and our struggles unite us to Christ. Christ reaches out his hands to us and we must do the same to Him. Let us abide in Him. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the

sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.” Psalm 46:1-3 - *Lucy Simon, Senior Campus Minister*

“Be Not Afraid” really spoke to me not only on a spiritual level, but in the world as well. I struggle with fears about what other people think about me and I am afraid to be myself. I think many people can relate to this theme which is why I love it so much.” - *John Paul Travasos, Senior Campus Minister*

We all have struggles and we all carry baggage, but we do not have to struggle alone. We do not have to carry the weight on our own. It doesn't matter where you are on this wild journey called faith, we are all called to trust in the Lord. Let us be not afraid in the Lord and reflect on what that means for us personally. Bringing this together, this theme is exciting yet very real. It takes a leap of faith to trust in the Lord, but if we aren't afraid to jump into the fire, the reward will be very real and worth it.

“I plead with you--never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire, and never become discouraged. Be not afraid.”

- St. Pope John Paul II