



Ludwig Boltzmann Institut
Neulateinische Studien

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**Words of Encouragement: Bartholomaeus Holzhauser's
Epistola Fundamentalis considered and compared to
contemporary British, Protestant exhortatory literature**

von

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(Wycliffe Hall, Oxford)

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im Zentrum für Alte Kulturen („Atrium“, Langer Weg 11, SR 5)

einzuladen.

Bartholomaeus Holzhauser was a seventeenth-century German priest, who lived for part of his life in the Tirol. He founded a fraternity of parish priests and continues to be revered by the Catholic church. He wrote on a variety of spiritual and prophetic themes. Among his lesser-studied works is the *Epistola Fundamentalis*, an open letter written to spur his followers on to courage, confidence and perseverance to the end, despite difficulties. It remains a powerful letter, encouraging the reader to keep going in difficulty. After some brief comments on the history and character of the text, I will analyse and discuss Holzhauser's main themes. I will then compare and contrast Holzhauser's handling of these themes with two British Protestant writers from the same period, Samuel Rutherford and John Bunyan. Rutherford wrote a number of letters, which like Holzhauser's, are written to encourage perseverance, courage and religious devotion. They have become classics of Reformed religious writing, still quoted by popular-level Reformed theologians today. Bunyan's most well-known work, *Pilgrim's Progress*, has never been out of print and remains one of the most influential books in conservative Protestantism, other than the Bible. By seeing how Holzhauser's letter echoes those of Paul and relates to his British contemporaries, I explore his place within the genre of "religious exhortatory literature".