

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

First and foremost, I hope that this message finds you and your families safe and well.

This week we have received some difficult news about the Government's decision to introduce a second national lockdown. For some this may be welcome news and for others it may be somewhat frustrating. Whatever your thoughts, it is once again a time of great uncertainty.

I want to reassure you that you are all my children and I am here for you. Never you think that you are alone or have to endure the burdens of this world in isolation. I say this, with conviction - There is always an option. As we enter into a new realm of working, I hope that this will be the first of my many communications to you.

I do not underestimate all the challenges you are facing and how hard life is at present for us. We all have our crosses and some are greater than others. We all have a story to tell so if you have someone you can confide in and they are a source of strength, please hold on to them. Treat them well. Respect them. Extend that love and care always. We all need someone. Never forget that the key to managing our crosses is actually the way in which we carry them. In the next few weeks, this will be especially telling. It will be a real testimony to ourselves and those around us as to how we can keep strong during times of adversity. Never forget that you are stronger than you think. Please do use this lockdown time wisely to seek out the things that bring you happiness. Focus your energies on that. There is nothing selfish about looking after yourself and your wellbeing. Whilst we might not have all the answers, we can continue to be a strong community of faith and love. Let us reach out to others as much as we can and support one another wholeheartedly. Let us truly live out the Gospel from our homes and workplaces and put into practice our Christian teachings. There are opportunities in everything, let us keep our eyes and ears open for the common good. This week our American friends went to the poll. We often hear of the 'American Dream' and how we can achieve that. Not wishing to predict the final outcome of the Presidential Elections, I would like you to ponder on this very subject of the American Dream and how you too can achieve it.

The American Dream

An American businessman was standing at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellowfin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish.

"How long did it take you to catch them?" the American asked.

"Only a little while" the Mexican replied.

"Why don't you stay out longer and catch more fish?" the American then asked.

"I have enough to support my family's immediate needs" the Mexican said.

"But" the American then asked, "What do you do with the rest of your time?"

The Mexican fisherman said: "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take a siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos. I have a full and busy life, senior."

The American scoffed: "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds you could buy a bigger boat and, with the proceeds from the bigger boat, you could buy several boats. Eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman, you would sell directly to the consumers, eventually opening your own can factory. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then LA and eventually NYC where you will run your expanding enterprise."

The Mexican fisherman asked: "But senior, how long will this all take?"

To which the American replied: "15-20 years."

"But what then, senior?"

The American laughed and said: "That's the best part. When the time is right, you would announce an IPO - an Initial Public Offering - and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich. You would make millions."

"Millions, senior? Then what?"

The American said slowly: "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take a siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos..."

The question is - are you living the dream?

As I sign off, know we remain forever united in prayer and our love for one another.

God bless you abundantly and may he pour out all his graces and favours on you and your families always.

Yours, Rev Fr Nicholas.