


**KEEP
CALM**
AND
**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**



Fr Nicholas's New Year Message

Dear brothers and sisters,

My greetings to you and your dear families. As, I write to you, I do hope you have rested well over this Christmas break and that you have enjoyed some much valuable time with your nearest and dearest. There is nothing more important in this world than that of your family.

The close of 2020 is now upon us and for many it might stir up that nostalgic feeling of years gone by. As I look back on the year and reflect where we are now, it conjures up many different emotions inside of me such as anticipation, pleasure, disappointment but also hope. Hope for a better and brighter future. We all need something to hang on to. We all need to be saved from moments of darkness and yet we all need to know there is light at the end of the tunnel. It is part of our human instinct to fight for survival and so as I end my 2020 with you, I invite you to take a few moments and reflect on the passage below:

Who Packs your Parachutes in Life?

Charles Plumb was a US Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said: "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!"

"How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb "I packed your parachute," the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said: "I guess it worked!" "It sure did," Plumb assured him. "If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

That night, Plumb couldn't sleep, as he kept thinking about that man.

Plumb says: "I kept wondering what he had looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat; a bib in the back; and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor." Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent at a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, each time holding the fate of someone he didn't know in his hands.

Now, Plumb asks us:

"Who's packing your parachute?" Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. He also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory - he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute. He called on all these supports before reaching safety.

Moral of the story: Sometimes, in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason.

As you go through this week, this month, this year, I encourage you to recognise the people who pack your parachutes. In 2021, be someone's light at the end of the tunnel and give someone hope for a brighter future.

Be the best you can be and you will never fail. Open the door to new opportunities and be the master of your own destiny!

As I sign off, I wish you ever blessing and grace for a wonderful and prosperous new year. May God continue to shower you with his graces and mercies now and forever.

Yours,

Rev Fr Nicholas Nwanzi