



Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I trust and hope by the grace of God you and your families are safe and well.

As we journey into 2021, we find ourselves wanting to forget about the past and start a fresh with new aspirations, dreams, goals, hopes and resolutions. We have eagerly awaited the arrival of 2021 and the anticipation of things returning to normal. However, as I sit here, I somehow find myself in the same place with the same thoughts and sentiments. Is it me or is it my imagination? What was I expecting to happen on 1 January? Was I waiting for a miracle? It certainly made me think - do I have unrealistic expectations? Can I achieve what I want this year or am I just merely fantasising?

Every January we are encouraged by the world outside to set some New Year Resolutions. Start as we mean to go on. Set the tone and pace for this year and fulfil those expectations. So if January is all about new beginnings surely that must mean every day is a new beginning? A new chapter in our lives, a new opportunity to make a difference, a new time to shine! Perhaps every day when we wake up we should have our own reality check? Throughout my life, I have been touched by some terrific people.

Family, friends and confidants who have gone out of their way to help and support me. I have learnt the value of human life and all that it possesses. Do you have such a person in your life? I do hope so. This 2021, I invite you to find that person in your life that you look up to and respect, please cherish them and nurture them. They will always be your reference point in life and will give you the answer that no one else will. I always like to give you a short story to reflect on and so here it is, my first story of 2021...

#### Having a Best Friend

Two friends were walking through the desert. At one stage in their journey, they had an argument and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything he wrote in the sand, "Today my best friend slapped me in the face." They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to have a wash.

The one who had been slapped got stuck in a mire and started drowning, but his friend saved him. After he had recovered from his shock, he wrote on a stone, "Today my best friend saved my life." The friend who slapped and saved his best friend asked him, "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write in stone, why?" The other friend replied, "When someone hurts us we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."

Moral of the story: Don't value the things you have in your life. Value those who you have in your life.

This week, I would like you to consider who your best friend is. Have you looked after them in the best possible way? Have you thanked them? Did they save your life? If so, please tell them! Don't hesitate to do the right thing in all circumstances. Be humble, be real, be you! Remember, every day you wake up is your opportunity to start afresh in this world. Do not let anyone hold you back from your destiny and what you were called to do. Step out with faith and confidence!

I wish you a blessed and peaceful week ahead with much peace, joy and happiness. You remain in my heart and prayers always. May God bless and guide you through this new year.

Yours,

Rev Fr Nicholas Nwanzi