



Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021

My dear brothers and sisters,

I hope that this message finds you and your families safe and in good health.

I am amazed how time flies! It was only a few days ago that I was writing to you and here we are again. Another week ticked off. Like many of you, I continue to watch the news stories in the media. However, I must admit, I do have difficulty keeping up with it all. The same monotonous news keeps on being communicated and when there is something of vague interest it is cut short. Is it me that only thinks this way? Life is certainly a mixed bag at times. In all honesty and sincerity, I have been amazed by the patience of our nation but more importantly the parents that are carefully balancing working from home and teaching their children. Just how do you manage? How do you organise yourselves? How do you prioritise your children and other conflicting needs in your household? It must be a real daily challenge and a heavy cross to carry.

I cannot begin to imagine how you cope with all the pressures of life. Similarly, I also think the same of our critical workers on the front line who are entrusted to care for and save the lives of so many people in our hospitals. And so it the theme of patience that I want to explore this week. They say patience is a virtue and I guess we can certainly empathise with that in today's current pandemic. However, I am not convinced that as human beings that we accept patience without getting angry or upset. Why should we? It is only natural to feel like that when we have been waiting for something so long that our patience begins to wane. I want to assure you that it is absolutely normal to feel frustrated. We should not suppress what burdens us but more importantly learn how to manage it in such a way. Perhaps it is now timely juncture to invite you to read a short passage before I continue.

There was a monk who was very impatient. You may wonder, why would a monk be impatient? Don't they become monks so that they don't have to deal with the world? Yes, that's true. So imagine how impatient this monk was...

The more he tried, the more impatient he became. So he decided that he must get away to learn to be patient. So he built himself a little home deep in the woods, far away from civilization.

Years later, a man was travelling in those woods and met him. The man was amazed to find anyone living so far away from the rest of the world, so he asked the monk why he was there all by himself. The monk said that he was there to learn to be patient.

The traveller asked how long he had been there, and the monk replied: seven years. Stunned, the traveller asked, "If there is no one around to bother you, how will you know when you are patient?" Annoyed, the monk replied, "Get away from me. I have no time for you."

Source: Unknown

I was fascinated by this short story. It just goes to demonstrate that we can make a lot of assumptions about people because of the role or positions they hold but they are just as human as anyone else. How many times have we preached patience to others to only find ourselves suddenly screaming back or having to swallow our words? Quite a lot I would imagine! Patience is not easy, and no one ever said that it would be. It is perhaps one of the most exhausting aspects of life without nothing actually happening!

Perhaps every time you feel impatience welling up from deep within, remember the monk! Learn patience where you are, with situations that challenge your patience and people that push your buttons. Patience is not the ability to wait but how you act while you're waiting.

I invite you this week to carefully think about your actions, thoughts and words. Think before you speak. Is it relevant? Is it necessary? Are you acting in haste? What is God asking of you? If you have to wait, will the world come to an end? Will your life fall apart? If the answer is no, then what are you doing? I

often speak about self-love, looking after one another. I say this for a reason. It is OK to stop, take stock and re-evaluate your lives. Learning the art of patience is a life enduring skill but once you have mastered it, it can conquer many mountains. Please do utilise your time this week to become patient with yourself first and foremost and then others around you. Lead by example and teach one another. We are never too old to learn a new way of life. So take a deep breath and when you are ready, begin to put those wheels in motion and continue on your path with a renewed spirit and passion.

As always, I wish you a blessed and peaceful week ahead. May God continue to shower his blessings upon you and your families. We remain forever united in love and prayer for one another.

Yours

Rev Fr Nicholas Nwanzi