

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Parish of Christ the King



My dear brothers and sisters,

By the grace of God, I hope and trust you and your families are keeping well and are in good health this week.

There has been much news in the media this week on so many different levels. Covid-19 continues to dominate the headlines as does Brexit, the sad passing of dear Captain Sir Captain Tom Moore not to mention the regular snow forecasts, hotel quarantines and the list goes on. As I sat at my desk pondering on my communication to you, I was trying to find a positive news item to share with you. However, for some reason, I found myself thinking of the world at large and humanity.

Many of you will know that being a priest, pastor, leader, counsellor or a manager involves managing and looking after people. In doing so, we are required to manage people's expectations, reach out to them in time of need as well as guide them and ensure that we are getting the best out of people and improving their life chances. From my own perspective, it is true to say that I certainly observe a lot of what is going on around me. Those of you that have encountered me know that I am a simple man but also a practical one. I very much listen to what others are saying, what the current affairs are and what is preoccupying the minds of those that speak to me.

My friends, I want you to know that so many of us are facing huge challenges in our lives on one level or another at this present time. Some more than others. Sometimes, we might take one step forward to only find we have taken three back. How many times has that happened to you? We all have our daily struggles, worries, hopes and aspirations. Yet, we are advised to just get on with it. Like or lump it some may say. There has, however, been one topic that has remained constant since this pandemic and that is the issue of our 'Mental Health'.

Everywhere we turn to, it is mentioned on the radio, in newspapers, on social media and more importantly face to face. There is no way of escaping issue right now. And so, it is this very subject that I would like to explore with you.

My dear brothers and sisters, do you know what it means to look after yourself? I mean 'really look after yourself'? If you are in doubt at this precise moment in time, I invite you to read the passage below:

A cobbler lived in a large village and he was the only cobbler in town, so he was responsible for repairing the boots of everybody else. However, he didn't have time to repair his own boots. This wasn't a problem at first, but over time, his boots began to deteriorate and fall apart.

While he worked feverishly on the boots of everyone else, his feet got blisters and he started to limp. His customers started to worry about him, but he reassured them that everything was OK.

However, after a few years, the cobbler's feet were so injured that he could no longer work and no-one's boots got repaired. As a consequence, soon the entire town started to limp in pain, all because the cobbler never took the time to repair his own boots.

This simple principle is so often disregarded. If you don't look after yourself, after a while you'll be no good to anyone else either. Your best intentions will mean nothing and you'll be unable to do what you're meant to do.

If you don't take the time to care for yourself, no-one else will.

Are you taking care of yourself? The moral of this story is simple: kindly take care of your health FIRST, only then you will be able to help others.

Self-care is not self-pamper, it is self-preservation and self-love.

Have you ever heard that God speaks to us through others? I am sure you have. Well, I can safely say it is true. Next time someone advises you to look after yourself or take it easy, please listen to that person. They are looking out for you when you cannot do that yourself. Nothing is really the end of the world. Prioritising yourself can be a marvellous journey if you only make time for it. Don't be the cobbler! Be kind to yourself for it is then that your cup of kindness overflows to the others. There is nothing selfish about taking care of your mental health and well-being. If you don't want to do it for yourself then please do it for those around you who love and cherish you.

None of us are excluded from mental health including myself. You may not realise but the love, care and friendship I receive from you is more than words can express. One day you will know the extent of my appreciation.

For now, and this week, please ensure you put yourself first. The mind is a powerful entity on its own. It can be constructive as well as destructive. Choose the former to make those changes in your life to achieve the happiness you deserve for the right reasons.

Very simply, if you like flowers, go and buy them yourself. Don't wait for someone to buy them for you. You could be waiting an awful long time or they might never arrive! You know what to do to get yourself back. Be brave and be you!

As I sign off, I wish you a blessed and peaceful week ahead. May almighty God continue to shower his graces and favours on you and your family.

We remain united in love, prayer and friendship always.

Yours,

Rev Fr Nicholas Nwanzi