

Sunday 21st February 2021



My dear brothers and sisters,

I trust and hope you and your families are healthy and well by the grace of God and that you had a good week.

Time has certainly flown by and here we are already in Lent. A period of self-reflection and sacrifice is what the Church asks us to do for the next 40 days. As we begin our Lenten journey together, I will invite you over the next six weeks to consider some insightful subjects. Under normal circumstances, we would be considering sacrifices and thinking about giving something meaningful up for Lent. However, it is my view that many of you are already making enough sacrifices in your life so I want to invite you to read the following passage and think about yourself....

Peter Parrot came home upset and confused.

"What's wrong?" his mother asked. "I hate my stupid beak!" Peter blurted. "Why do you hate your beak? I think it's beautiful," his mother said reassuringly.

"All of the other birds have much cooler beaks. Sammy Spoonbill, Pammy Pelican, Harry Hawk, Freddy Finch, all of them!" Peter's mother sat silently for a moment. "He may be right," she thought to herself, they do have very cool beaks.

"You should go and see Major Macaw, he'll know what to do. He's the wisest of the parrots and lives in the tallest tree in the forest. Yes, he'll know what to do," responded Peter's mother.

So Peter Parrot flew to the tallest tree in the forest and found Major Macaw. "Excuse me Major, I have a problem," said Peter. "Oh dear, what can it be?" asked the venerable macaw.

"I have a stupid beak. Why can't I have a cool beak like Sammy Spoonbill, Pammy Pelican, Harry Hawk or Freddy Finch?" "You're right," said the macaw, "They do have cool beaks. Tell me Peter, do you like eating worms and crustaceans?"

"Yuck! That would be disgusting!" responded Peter. "Well, that's what the spoonbill's beak is designed for. What about fish?" "I couldn't think of anything worse," said Peter.

"So, the pelican's beak wouldn't work either." "What about rabbits and mice?" "Eww." "OK, so maybe you shouldn't aspire to have a hawk's beak. Small seeds?" "They're not so bad, but my favourite is Brazil nuts." exclaimed Peter, salivating at the thought.

"That's lucky, I think I have a few here. Would you like one?" asked Major.

Peter's eyes lit up. "Yes, please." "Tell me Peter, if you had the beak of a spoonbill, pelican, hawk or finch, do you think that you could eat that Brazil nut?" "I guess not," said Peter with his mouth full.

"You see, young parrot, you have been designed a certain way, with certain skills, attributes and tastes. Don't waste your life being envious of the capacities of others, just make sure that you know what you're good at and why you're here."

Peter nodded his head in understanding and flew back home much more content.

As you have gathered, this week, I have reflected on the theme of envy and jealousy. Why? Because it is one of the very subjects and we cannot accept or want to hear or necessarily digest.

However, it is an area that we are all called to explore and examine as human beings for it is one of the main reasons that impacts on our own behaviours and how we channel that to others.

You see my brothers and sisters; you were designed for a specific purpose. Do not worry about the skills and attributes of others, they have their own purpose that probably would not suit you.

You have the ability to do remarkable things just as you are. Work on that . Get better at those skills.
Can you relate to this?

If you use social media, you will see posts from friends. They have a new job, clothes, a new partner, new house or they're having a baby or they look so in love or they recently lost weight or accomplished something they had been working towards.

Although you might like this person and you should be really happy for them, inside of you, you are not. You feel envious or jealous maybe? Guess what, a lot of us have been there but why?

That's easy! When we feel jealous or bitter or envious, it is usually because that other person has made a step and done something that you could have done if you had not chosen the things you had chosen to do in the past or right now. When those feelings well up, it is a strong indication that something is not ticking in our own lives. Instead of remaining with those negative and destructive emotions, we can use them to realign ourselves to where we want to be. We can grasp these emotions to motivate ourselves to move forward. If you see that someone has progressed in life, be happy for that person Engage with them, you might learn something new. Very often, we are envious or jealous of the people that we want to be. However, I say to you yesterday, today and tomorrow - just be yourself! You are not competing with anyone. God has blessed you with a unique set of talents. Find yours and use yours for the greater good.

In addition to talents, we all have different problems, at different times in our lives. Perfection is a mirage. No one has a perfect life. What we do have is infinite blessings and opportunities. We all have challenges and we don't know what struggles others are facing.

This week, I invite you to take off any rose-tinted glasses and look at yourselves and each other in a different light. Find your driving force and motivator and put it too good use. Start to examine any thoughts that prevent you from forging ahead. Start to progress and not regress...

I wish you and your dear families a blessed and fruitful Lenten journey. You remain in my heart, prayers and thoughts always.

Yours Rev Nicholas Nwanzi