



**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

My dearest brothers and sisters,

Greetings to you and your families. I do hope you had a blessed week and enjoyed the opportunity to get together in the glorious sunshine.

In my numerous dialogues with parishioners over the years, I have discovered the uniqueness of family. Sometimes, I hear that people are excited to see their loved ones and conversely some dread the thought of seeing their relatives. I guess we can all relate to this on some level. Why? For the simple reason we are human and we do not always get along with our nearest and dearest. There is a common known proverb 'you can choose your friends but can't choose your family'. An interesting notion that is of course true. Sometimes we find it difficult loving the people that we are the closest to. We we can often absent ourselves from their lives out of choice. I wonder if this has happened to you? This week I stumbled across a short passage that articulated my thoughts:

The coldest winter

It was one of the coldest winter and many animals were dying because of the cold. The porcupines, realizing the situation, decided to group together to keep each other warm. This was a great way to protect themselves from cold and keep each of them warm; but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions.

After a while, they decided to distance themselves, but they too began to die due to cold. So they had to make a choice: either accept the quills of their companions or choose death. Wisely, they decided to go back to being together. They learned to live with the little wounds caused by the close relationship with their companions in order to receive the warmth of their togetherness. This way they were able to survive.

Please take some time reflect on this passage. To me it speaks volumes. There is much to be gained from accepting some minor foibles in our family relationships. Perhaps we need to be more tolerant of the little things that can easily upset us and see the greater good of that relationship. These days it is too easy to give up on people. Is it them or is it us that needs to change? Surely, we can find a way to be more gracious and accepting of each other.

This week, I invite all of us to look at those areas in our lives and see if we can be a wise porcupine!

I wish you a blessed and peaceful new week ahead. May God bless you abundantly and continue to shower you with his graces and favours today and always.

Yours,

Rev Fr Nicholas Nwanzi