

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2022**



My dear brothers and sisters,

I extend my warmest of greetings to you and your families as we begin together our Lenten journey of 2022.

Every Lent we are invited to undergo a process of self-examination and consider what sacrifices we should make over the next 40 days. This part of our penance as followers of Christ to appreciate temptation and resistancy as he did. For some of us, this comes very easy. We choose to give up chocolate, alcohol, a TV programme, time on our phones or some other materialistic attachment. For others this can be more challenging and we procrastinate over what to do. Here is a short story that made me think twice.

A Lion and a mouse

It was a hot summer day. Sun was shining bright up in the sky. A lion was sitting under the shade of a big tree and in some time got asleep. Nearby that tree, there was a hole, in which there lived a mouse. When the lion was sleeping, the mouse came out of its hole and saw him asleep.

Unaware of the lion's strength, it got tickled by an idea. It thought of waking up the lion by running over his body just for fun.

Unfortunately, the lion seized it in his strong paw. The mouse pleaded for its life. Being generous by nature, the lion set it free. The mouse promised to help the lion if it ever got the chance. The lion laughed aloud at this. After all, how could a tiny mouse help the king of the jungle?

A few days later, the mouse was passing through the jungle when he saw the same lion trapped in a hunter's net. Immediately, it set to work, gnawing at the ropes. Very soon the tiny mouse had set the lion free.

The moral of the story? Remember, mercy never goes unrewarded.

My dear brothers and sisters, over the last few years we have endured many insurmountable hurdles and made significant sacrifices in our lives. This has affected our civil liberties, our relationships, our mental health, our physical healthy, our general emotional wellbeing, our employment and much more.

This week we have witnessed horrific scenes in Ukraine and human sacrifice is being brought before us in the most graphic form on the TV and on social media. There is no escaping the disturbing and chilling scenes. It is for this reason I am not going to invite you to sacrifice things in your life this Lent. As human beings, we have endured much and many of us suffer in silence with our own trials and tribulations on a daily basis. We all carry our crosses in one form or another. Therefore, this 2022 I merely invite you to be the mouse in the story and to extend your love and gratitude to those in your immediate community and wider circle like Ukraine, if you can. For it is love that can truly change the world. Walk humbly with God and continue to enjoy all the wonderful mercies he bestows on you. If you can share what you have then that is more than sufficient. Just continue to look after yourselves and each other. Don't 'give up' but 'give out' this Lent.

We remain forever united in love and prayer for one another. May God continue to bless you and your families abundantly.

Yours affectionately,

Rev Fr Nicholas Nwanzi