

Sunday 10th July 2022

Hello my dear brothers and sisters, I hope this week finds you and your families joyful and peaceful.

"The cost of Living and The stealing of Bread"

Many families today are struggling to eat three meals a day. Two weeks ago, one of our Mothers from our parish, took me to "ALEM Afro-Caribbean Fresh Food and Fruits Shop."

She encouraged me to pick the food and the vegetables I need, and then proceeded to buy more for a parishioner who is struggling to cope with the present economic situation of the country.

On arrival to the presbytery, I sat down to meditate and ponder about our visit to the parishioner who just received boxes of food stuff from the hands of Mama Good Samaritan of our parish.

As I was reflecting on the effects of hunger on adult, especially on our young Children, I remembered a story of a judge who passed a memorable Sentence on a 15 year old boy who was caught stealing bread. Now the Story:

This was a fifteen year old boy.... He was caught stealing bread from a store. On trying to escape from the hold of the guard, a shelf of the store was also broken.

The judge heard the crime and asked the boy, "Did you really steal something, a loaf of bread and cheese?"

The boy responded by looking down;- "Yes."

Judge: - "Why?"

Boy: - "I needed it."

Judge: - "Couldn't you have bought it?"

Boy: - "There was no money."

Judge: - "Did you not ask your family for the money?"

Boy: - "There is only a mother in the house. Sick and unemployed."

Judge: - "Don't you do anything to earn money?"

Boy: - "Used to wash cars. When I took a day off to take care of my mother, I was fired."

Judge: - "Why did not ask someone for help?"

Boy: - "Had left the house since morning, asked about fifty (50) people, but no help; so, I decided to take this step at the very end."

When the arguments ended, the judge began to pronounce the verdict as follows:

... "the theft and especially the stealing of Bread by a hungry boy is a very shameful crime and we are all responsible for this crime."

Every person in the court, including me, is guilty and a perpetrator, so every person present here is fined ten pounds each. No one can get out of here without giving ten pounds.

Saying this, the judge took ten pounds out of his own pocket and then picked up the pen and started writing name accordingly:

- 'In addition, the Judge moaned, I fine the store a thousand pounds for handing over a hungry child to the Police.'
'If the penalty is not deposited within 24 hours, the court will order to seal the store.'

Also the Police is fined the same amount for charging a hungry boy to court.

'By giving the full amount of fine to this boy, the court asks for forgiveness from that boy.'

After hearing the verdict, tears were pouring from the eyes of the people present in the court, that boy's handcuffs were also untied.

The boy was watching the judge again and again, who came out hiding his tears.

Dear brothers and sisters, Are our society, systems and courts ready for such a decision?

I must say that if a hungry person is caught stealing bread, then the people of that country should be ashamed.

As I thank the St Vincent De Paul society of our parish, for the good work they are doing. May I encourage all to choose someone to give succour or at least, put smile on a face of any person that needs your help, if you can. Though I insist that children around us should not sleep without food.

Thank you for listening and may this week bring you joy and peace. May the intercession of our Blessed mother Mary protect you and your families, Amen.

Yours Affectionately,
Father Nicholas Nwanzi.