



16 October 2020

**Letter S 30 / 20**

Dear Parishioners,

When it comes to my personal reading interests during this uncertain time, I have noticed in these past couple of weeks, the word *resilience*, cropping up on almost every second page. Whether it just a 5 to 10-page internet article, or scanning through a book of interest at Bargain Books or Exclusive Book Shop, the word *resilience* stands out and really sits with me, as I navigate myself; praying, reflecting and thinking about us as a parish during this challenging time.

Covid-19 has really shifted our personal lives at our very core and also the way we are doing ministry in our parish. Every day we are all challenged to engage with life as it presents itself differently. Many of us have had to re-invent, re-think, and dare to say, even re-frame how we move forward in all aspects of our lives.

I recently joined an international Online Hub consisting mostly of international clergy (I think I'm the only South African) from various denominations, and multi-disciplinary leaders in their own particular fields of interest. The purpose of the Hub is to encourage each other through webinars, sharing common experiences and provide available resources in assisting clergy and congregations during these complex and uncertain times.

I took part in my first webinar this past week – sharing in a conversation: “*Resilience and ministry.*” I just smiled at myself, and had a profound sense and experience of being part of something life giving and bigger than myself. It was a good feeling.

Let me share with you a few of the reflections which I took from the webinar, and gently invite you to reflect on your own personal journey, and your parish church during this time.

I begin briefly, with a common definition (my own understanding and interpretation) of *resilience* as the ability to overcome hard choices, tragedy, trauma, crisis or simply life's challenges. Simply put, to remain hopeful, and to retain the will to begin again even if it takes you in a new direction which you may be unsure about.

Let me share a few pointers which I pinned down for myself as I go about what I am called to do every day.

- The first is to hold on to God's vision for myself, my family and the parish. God is always present, although personal circumstances changed, God reveals Godself in new and exciting ways. The challenge however, is to gracefully listen and see what God is up to, especially in our normal daily conversations and activities.
- Secondly, simply to open myself up to a curious sense of humour. If it means dancing the "*Jerusalem Dance*" with others, so be it.
- Thirdly, keeping my heart open to God through learning a few new things, and allowing and being open to others teaching me a thing or two.
- Fourth is to nurture a forgiving nature and be compassionate towards oneself and others. I always remind myself that we are all in this together and not to take everything too personally.
- Lastly, is simply to live in God's blessings every day. Saying thank you for the small little things I often take for granted and supporting others as much as I can.

I share this with you as we journey together. Let us keep on praying for each other, and with God's help, to continue to support the parish the best way we can.

This is all for now.

With love,

***Selwyn***