



20 November 2020

**Letter S 32 / 20**

Dear Parishioners,

I still prefer writing things down with a pen on paper, instead of typing things out. When it comes to sermons, I become a little envious of my colleagues when I notice their sermons are neatly typed out and mine looks like “*hieroglyphics*”, according to whoever has silently slipped into my study and peaked at what their daddy is going to say on Sunday. I think I am probably still the only priest who writes down sermons in this day and age. My only prayer after I delivered a sermon, is that no one says to me afterwards, “*Father, can I have a copy of your sermon, please...?*” Personally, there is just something meaningful for me, in putting things down on paper.

As a visual person, I find my thought processes become easier and more fluid and I tend to be more creative when I think in images.

I am currently journeying with a friend who has experienced quite a few losses over the past few months (I have asked his permission to write about this). He lost his dad due to Covid-19, and then, a few weeks after the passing away of his dad, his closest friend, with whom he grew up, died. In addition to this he recently he lost his job.

So, in finding ways and means to be there for him during this difficult time, I shared with him, an article I came across, written by Lama Surya Das: “*Letting go of the person you used to be.*”

The article is about chronicling your losses in a journal. I was amazed at how, after putting it into practice, he is still finding the article very helpful. And now he is apparently sharing it with others he knows, who are going through similar experiences at this time.

On hearing from him, I decided to do the same; to chronicle losses which I have experienced over the past few months. Although mine are not as severe as his, I was just dumbstruck with the process of connecting with my own losses, no matter how small. I put down even the smallest things I was used to doing, and just simply letting go of them. There were even some I have to defer for now. It's amazing how much you really come to know about yourself, if you apply to yourself what you always suggest to others.

As we continue to navigate ourselves through this pandemic, we are all going through some sort of loss whether or not we admit it. Many people really find it difficult to name their losses. I discovered that when I have to write down my losses on paper and name them, that there is indeed more to my hieroglyphics.

Doing the exercise, I asked myself the following:

What did I really lose? – Why did I lose it? - Have I healed from the loss? - Will I ever heal from the loss? - Do I want to heal from the loss? – If I have healed, what lessons have I learned about myself? – What lessons can I apply to current or future loss? – Have I stopped blaming myself?

In trying to answer these questions truthfully, I also wrote down the feelings I was experiencing. This took quite a bit of time for me, but it was worthwhile to get in touch with my feelings. The last question I was trying to really answer was this: Am I still angry or bitter? And if so, how can I overcome this?

Well, I'm still busy putting my pen to paper...!

And yet, I feel a little lighter. Maybe you should do the same.

This is all for now.

With love,

***Selwyn***