

10th May "Comfort my People" REFLECTION: Carrying COVID tensions (2)

*Yesterday's segment evoked a call to continue charitably in lockdown, especially in the de-escalation weeks that lie ahead.*

*Today's extract links directly with the words of Jesus in the gospel reading of the day, 'Whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works.' (Jn 14:12)*

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All of us experience tension in our lives: in our families, in our friendships, in our places of work, in our churches, in our communities, and tension within our conversations around other people, politics, and current events. And, being good-hearted people, we carry that tension with patience, respect, graciousness, and forbearance – for a while! Then, at a certain point we feel ourselves stretched to the limit, grow weary of doing what is right, feel something snap inside of us, and hear some inner-voice say: Enough! And we let go, unlike the little boy clinging to the ice; we let go of patience, respect, graciousness, and forbearance, either by venting and giving back in kind or simply by fleeing the situation.

Carrying tension or letting it go, is a crucial moral site, one that determines character.

Parents put up with a lot of tension in raising their children. Teachers put up with a lot of tension in trying to open the minds and hearts of their students. Friends absorb a lot of tension in remaining faithful to each other. Young women and men put up with a lot of sexual tension waiting for marriage. Christians put up with a lot of tension in helping to absorb the immaturities and sins of their churches. Men and women are noble of character precisely when they can walk with patience and respect ... amid crushing and unfair tensions.

However, carrying tension does not mean carrying abuse. Those of noble character and sanctity of soul challenge abuse rather than enable it through well-intentioned acquiescence. Sometimes, in the name of virtue and loyalty, we are encouraged to absorb abuse, but that is antithetical to what Jesus did. He loved, challenged, and absorbed tension in a way that took away the sins of the world.

But all of this will not be easy. It's the way of long loneliness, with many temptations to let go and slip away.

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