

## Building Resilience

This morning I want to talk about resilience. Maybe you may pick up and develop what I believe are the 4 keys required to embrace resilience.

What does this word mean? One dictionary describes it as "The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or suffering."

I wonder what your understanding of resilience is. I am fairly sure you have discovered it for yourself, as you tried to build it up over these last 3-4 months.

They say that suffering happens while the sun shines, while others carry on as usual, while the traffic continues to flow. St. Paul in the book of Romans Chapter 12 reading this morning encourages us to "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering" verse 12

Perhaps when you put on your theological goggles today, you could tune them in to the lens of RESILIENCE.

From today's Gospel reading we see that Jesus prepares his disciples to embrace resilience. He does so by predicting his passion and death that awaits him in Jerusalem. He talks of these coming days as necessary and being the will of God. I guess what Jesus is saying is that suffering and death is part of the human journey.

It is clear to Jesus that his relationship with God involves anguish, suffering and rejection at a personal level. In addition to the knowledge that the crucifixion is a violent and public death. Yet with this knowledge, Jesus builds resilience through prayer. The **first key** to embrace resilience is to pray, and through your prayer invite God into the midst of what it is you are faced with. Prayer does not demand that we interrupt what is happening, rather that we continue living as if the trial is part of prayer.

Peter is frankly appalled at this prospect and tries to deflect Jesus from the path that lies ahead. After having declared Jesus to be the Christ, a title associated with victory and glory, Peter now denies that Jesus must suffer. Peter wants to banish suffering from the agenda; Jesus brings the subject to the forefront of the conversation. St. Paul, in Romans 12, teaches us that we can overcome. Therefore the **second key** to embrace resilience is to trust God that you will overcome through his goodness. They say there is always someone else worse off than you.

To understand Jesus, means to understand the cross. That is the essence of his teaching and that is why Peter is denounced so strongly. Peter is seen as a tempter: his ambitions and desires, Jesus says, belong to the realm of Satan. Peter wants Jesus to be immune from frustration, suffering and contempt. The Christ of his dreams is all glory and prestige, untouched by vulnerable humanity. It is a world away from the Christ that Jesus has had to grow into, a future of suffering which he is about to enter.

The way of the cross that Jesus outlines for himself is the way of renunciation his followers are called to tread. Jesus faced suffering which could be conquered only if it was accepted. He faced rejection which could be transformed only if he assented to it. If the suffering was to pass, it had to be endured: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it."

I have walked along the Via Dolorosa, in Jerusalem. It is the way of the cross which Jesus followed. It was one which passed through streets and markets, by houses and palaces, by windows and doors. While it happened people went about their business. Suffering must run the course of the familiar.

Therefore the **third key** to embrace resilience is carrying the cross. As Christians we live in the assurance that our way of the cross does not go unnoticed. Jesus is our suffering companion; as we carry the cross, he proves to be our strength; his power is mighty in our weakness. If the cross is the price to be paid for love, then carrying it is love's proof in action. For Jesus this is enough.

The **fourth key** to embrace resilience is to reflect with God, listen with God and allow your faith to build.

So let us use the fourth key right now: close your eyes, open your hands, breathe gently and listen to this poem and own its words..

ONLY A SHADOW: written in 1971 by Rev. Carey Landry

The love, I have for You, my Lord, Is only a shadow of Your love for me;  
Only a shadow of Your love for me, Your deep, abiding love.

My own belief in You, my Lord, Is only a shadow of Your faith in me;  
Only a shadow of Your faith in me, Your deep and lasting faith.

The dream I have today, my Lord, Is only a shadow of Your dreams for me,  
Only a shadow of all that will be, If I but follow You.

The joy I feel today, my Lord, Is only a shadow of Your joys for me,  
Only a shadow of Your joys for me, When we meet face to face.

My life is in Your hands, My life is in Your hands.  
My love for You will grow, my God; Your light in me will shine.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.