Columns
Ministry



Sisters attend a Talitha Kum Uganda Network (TAKUN) training workshop ahead of advocacy for vulnerable victims of trafficking in persons. (Mary Lilly Driciru)



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In spite of how much we know about being careful when dealing with personal and group dynamics, there are a growing number of challenges of conflicts and crises — often caused by people with diverse opinions — with consequent loss of inner peace. This simple but profound situation has caused adverse effects, from psychosocial breakdowns to death.

During this Lenten season, it is worthwhile to unite all our pains with that of the suffering Messiah, in order to convert all painful situations into "redemptive pain," which will bear multiple fruits for all.

This reflection is based on real situations where I have seen less resilient friends, contemporaries and relatives succumb to stressful death. On the other hand, I thank God for accompanying some others through "redemptive suffering" into becoming positive and resilient persons, come what may! This kind of person embraces pain and becomes self-redemptive, liberated, and able to withstand all types of challenges in life.

Do you want to know the source of strength for enduring redemptive pain? The answer is found throughout the Scriptures: It is by establishing a parent-child relationship with God. You could start anywhere, but referring to Psalm 1 is a good introduction to the dynamics: *Happy is the just man/woman who is sincere in his/her love of God. He/she is like a tree planted near running waters that bears fruit in due season.*

In an earlier column, I mentioned the need to pray and/or intercede for a positive mindset. I tried to make the column serve as a "whistle blow" and a cry to save many vulnerable brothers and sisters who are unable to withstand any challenging situation.

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Much as vulnerability is prevalent among young people, surprisingly many adults are prey to it also, and fail to process a negative situation into positive. It is good to note that great opportunities come with pain/torture, vulnerability and failure.

**Brokenness and vulnerability are part of the game**

To be successful and walk in victory is not about being a billionaire or operating an elegantly magnificent project, but rather about self-management and moving on with Jesus the King of life, so that victory becomes your crown! The rich can also cry: *But those who wait upon God get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles* (Isaiah 40:31).

When some people get emotional and cry out, it is healthy, and it often leads to self-liberation and a positive mindset. One may fail, stumble, and fall several times along the way to self-liberation. No worries! But remain focused on the goal of being an independently unique being.

At the end of the tunnel, where the light awaits, you could also turn back and see how far you have come. This serves as a reference point reserved for the future. It helps us to overcome other challenges because — by the grace of God — you have become an "overcoming challenge" warrior! Others can learn from you and become resilient, thus making the world a better place.

This act of perseverance makes one take initiatives, risks and become innovative. In this case, a strong network of resilient people can be built, if these people can become models on whose shoulders other vulnerable and struggling people can comfortably ride to the next level.

**Points for internalization**

Problems are part of our life. The challenge comes with character formation; otherwise, our initial formation from birth to 6 years can determine whether we shall be strong and courageous, or weak cowards. Jesus our Master forewarned us when he said, *You think I have come to spread peace and calm over the earth, but my coming will bring conflict and division not peace* (Matthew 10:34ff)

Jesus cried and prayed for unity but many people opt for disunity. *Oh Jerusalem, how often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn't let me* (Matthew 23:37). And in his priestly prayer: *I pray that they may all be one. Father! May they be in us just as you are in me and I am in you* (John 17:21).

It is after we have worked on ourselves that we can go out to do good in the light of the Gospel, respond to the cry of the Earth, the poor, the marginalized and the trafficked, and become signs of hope in the hopeless world.

This story appears in the **Lent** feature series. View the full series.