

Third Sunday of Matthew 07 July 2019

Tone 2

From today's gospel

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon...

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

So do not be anxious about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of itself.

Coming back to Toronto, even for just one day, gives you the opportunity to count the damages done to your body by mosquitoes, "dear" flies, poison ivy (only getting away from the threat of it is a relief), ants and other creatures that you cannot even distinguish and name. And you see that they are not few but many and more discussions arise about who has more bites, what type and which one is more itchy, painful or what part of your face did not swell this morning because you got lucky yesterday. However, what the city does for the body, in allowing us to assess the damage done by the forest, the refuge does for the soul.

After only a couple of days spent at the refuge you start to notice the damage done to the soul by the lifestyle that Toronto offers. You need to get away to see the sorrow and harm brought in our lives by technology, the business type relationships we live in, the waste of time and the lack of reality we are surrounded with. For a moment, let's try to forget about the real inner struggle or the real brokenness we all experience. You can sin in the city as you can sin in the forest, and here as there, there are paths to holiness, when truth is lived and not denied. What I am referring to here is the dynamic of our large community, our big city or modern world, that tries to keep you captive in a fantasy land. With no exit to reality. The refuge is real for us because, as father was saying in church after vespers this week, we go there trying to rediscover what it means not to waste time. Not to admire the nature but to learn again to be present in it, by praying, working and taking care of the land. Then you see within yourself the difficulty to pray, the anger you have, the fear, the lack of trust, the lack of attention, and so many other things. The wandering off of our mind without reason, both day and night. The restlessness of our heart. You come to realise what a messy life we have. What a messy faith we live with right now as well.

But even though we see at the refuge how messy our faith is, and how we mess with life, the refuge also lets you see the thirst we all have to draw from the source. After we get tired counting all the sorrows and wounds of the soul, when we get close to the bottom, we rediscover the desire to love God with all our being. And this gives us rest and hope. In how to learn to live again, to trust, to have faith, and not get overwhelmed when we do come back to the lifestyle of the city, but instead try to change slowly, but firmly our course of life. By closing some doors within our life that lead us nowhere, and open our heart a little bit, because great hope is coming from there. We are not a slow cooker under pressure, but a vessel that receives the grace of God, in order to open up to Him and to each other. And if we put a lid on it, we can spend all our time living in fear that we could explode one day. And who really wants to live like that? Under pressure without cooking anything.

From today St Paul's letter to the Galatians. :

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Prayer news:

This week, we prayed more than usual at the camp. With Matins and Vespers, regular format every day. With Liturgy at 7:00 am on Friday. And with prayer every time we eat or go on a hike. As you pray more, you want to pray more. This is what I saw in our youngsters this week. "God grants prayer to those who pray".