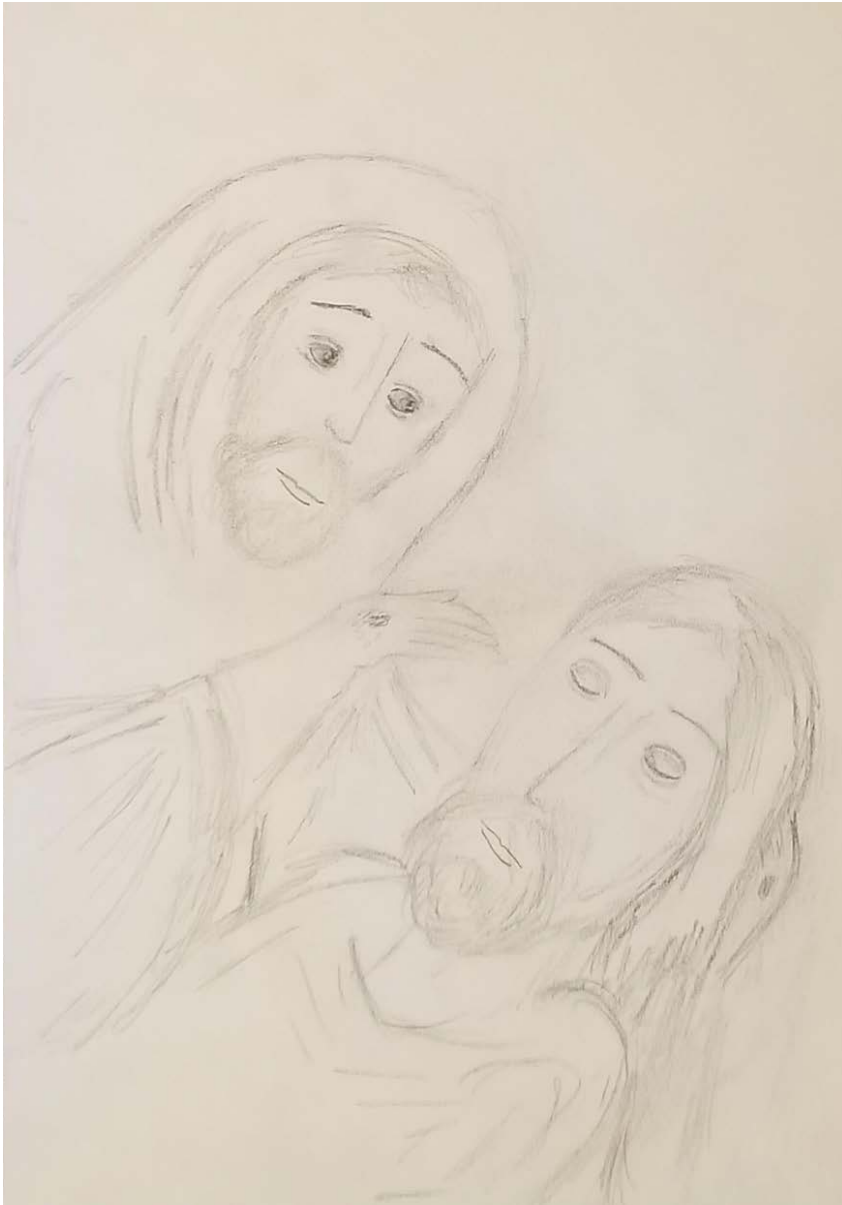




Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)  
The Gospel According to Matthew  
25:31-46



*"Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."*

On Thursday morning one of our guests collapsed on the floor in pain. H. came into the chapel to let us know that he was in pain and could barely move. We did not know what

was wrong with him. We already had people collapsing on the floor before or passing out in the washroom because of an overdose. This time it didn't look anything like that. People around were speculating that he might have had a heart attack. H. was on the phone with the 911 operator, trying to translate the questions between the operator and the person who was in pain with no success. He could neither speak nor move because of the pain. A feeling of hopelessness was settling in the room while the 911 operator kept insisting on talking to a person who was not able to speak because of pain. I was not sure why he could not understand that.

On the floor, the sick person looked like a stranger to all of us. His face was covered by a mask and his body was squirming, making it impossible for us to tell who he was. I could not help thinking how he must have felt suffering like that, alone, being watched by people who were strangers to him and who could not help much, other than making a 911 call. That thought gave me anxiety. We were afraid that the ambulance might be too late and we could not do anything to stop something tragic from happening. Only the voice of the operator on the phone, on speaker, seemed to be sure of the questions being asked. The questions were clear and assertive, it did not matter that there were no answers on the other side of the phone. The ambulance was taking way too long to come...

Without any expertise, I dared to get closer to the suffering man, breaking the 6 feet barrier. I knew I could not help and I was also afraid not to intrude in his pain, as one who does not know to respect the suffering of others from a distance. As I got closer, I recognized him. We had once spoken at length in the chapel about his joy of coming back to the mission after 15 years. I think he recognized me as well because the tone in his shivering voice changed - it became personal - and he struggled to tell me that he had been in the hospital the day before, that he had slept outside over the night and that he was taking pain killers for his back. He was in pain and very frightened because he did not know the cause of it. The pain did not decrease, the ambulance was still late and the unknown cause of his illness was still there, but I felt that something changed radically in him, in us, and in the room. He was no longer going through all of this by himself. We recognized him, he recognized us and his pain became personal. The ambulance took more time to come, he was still in pain and complaining but the panic and despair had disappeared. The paramedics arrived in the room and took over. The same questions and the same impersonal way of approaching a suffering human being. I was shocked when I saw they were forcing him to walk. It was painful for all of us to watch. H. was confused and she could not understand why they were doing that. Me neither. It might have been a matter of procedure. They must have known what they were doing. Even so, I thought at the moment that those people had probably never experienced acute back pain and had no idea how that must feel. I happened to live a couple of episodes of acute back pain when I was literally unable to move for a day or two. The paramedics eventually took him to the ambulance and from there to the hospital, asking more questions.

It is hard to understand why today's gospel cannot be taken for what it is. We see and hear so many interpretations that our mind is spinning and our heart is filled with anger. What makes us think, at times, that knowing Christ is related to things that are not mentioned in today's gospel? Just to reinterpret and reevaluate the sickness, the hunger, the thirst, the nakedness of Christ? How is that good and how is that going to help anybody? All these are consequences of a world wounded by sin. The nakedness, the hunger, the thirst, the isolation. If we don't meet Christ here, in the little consequences of our lack of love, how do we think that we can meet Him within the resurrection, when He conquers the biggest consequence of our lack of love - which is death? The fear of death grows proportionally with our impersonal way to encounter Christ in the poor, in the sick, in the naked today.

The sin cannot be met but through the goodness of God of which all of us are asking to partake today. The wound asks for the oil as the soul asks for mercy and the heart for a sign that death does not become impersonal for humanity as we become more strangers and more impersonal with each other. Death and suffering cannot be impersonal because healing and the resurrection are the opposite: personal. We cannot go through suffering alone so we can meet together happily in the resurrection.

*"The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another.."*

The last judgement might also refer to the last way in which we can really meet Christ in the brokenness of our heart. Because, is it not so, when everything is good we betray the goodness. In the garden, as a prodigal son or as a people released from captivity that remembered the idols left behind and asked for more meat. To meet Christ in those who are made vulnerable by life touches in us the deepest abyss of the heart where the complicity of our own sin is connected with our pain and the need to forgive and be forgiven. Where the lack of love in the heart is hindered by the desire to love. The encounter is a must because it is the only thing that can touch the love that is going to be, so the buds of life can look for the warmth of the light and grow by being watered by the honesty of the soul that cries when it realises what it has done to God.

The last judgment is the last way in which we can meet Christ before being fully covered by the light of the resurrection by embracing through our desire to love the one that we rejected through ignorance and betrayal in the first place.

***Antiphon II.***

*If the Lord were not among us, none of us  
could have withstood a single battle with the foe.*

*They who are victorious are herefrom exalted.  
Let not my soul be caught like a sparrow in  
their teeth, O Logos. Woe is me! How shall I be  
delivered from the enemy, enamored with sin as I  
am?*

You promised, oh Christ, that you will always be with us, why then, there are today people left on the street wondering without any prodigal son coming their way?

You promised us, oh Christ, that when two or three will be gathered together for your sake you will always be in our midst, why then, the gatherings have bars at the doors and the naked are humiliated and those who are clothed have no shame today?

You promised us, oh Christ, that the signs of the Resurrection will be accompanied by the signs where people drinking poisoned potion would not be harmed by it, why then the young are sick of drugs and dying on the street today?

You promised us, oh Christ, that through our faith, the "death" will come to know You the Prince of peace and the Saviour of our souls, why then today those who want to live are rendered to death as a promised token for a life long forgotten that might never have existed?

You promised us, oh Christ, that if we have faith we can move the mountains into the sea, why then can we not keep watch alone one hour in prayer with you?

We betrayed you, oh Christ, through our ignorance and our forgetfulness. We are like young people who speak and preach from books without living and sharing any suffering with those that we harmed. Like those who can describe the taste of water but have never taken a sip from it. We are thirsty and dry and lack repentance.

We asked You to receive this lent our heart in repentance and to teach us all the days of our life how to come closer to those who hunger and thirst, to those who are abandoned and to those who are forgotten behind the bars. We want to live a life with the poor as You have been living within our life, with a measure that fits every soul since the time began.

### **Antiphon I..**

*I direct my eyes to You in heaven, O Logos.  
Show me mercy, so that I may live in You.*

It is fair to think that people who are in need of love might be bothered by our desire to be kind. And so we keep it always within ourselves, because we are not bothered at all. But in the end, the only thing that is intrusive in a suffering soul is our tendency to shine away. This week I met again with a friend of our community. She has a very hard life. Very, very hard. She is on the edge. She was crying as she was speaking full of rage at everything that happened to her, in the past, in the present, and even in a terrifying unknown future.

As her distress was reaching its peak, I suddenly noticed her smiling. As if a miracle had just touched her soul. Or a flying angel had just passed her way. It was not an angel, at least not this time. Only a child walking with his father on the street. The innocence and the goodness of the child took away all the thoughts of distress from her mind. If the child did not come her way, a crisis might have started just there on the street. The innocence of goodness breaks any form of distress in a person's life.

In the gospel today, Christ does not tell us that we have to heal the sick, but to visit him. He does not tell us that we need to solve the problem of inequity in the world but to share with the one that comes our way. He does not tell us that we need to change the justice system, but to reach out to those whose freedom was taken away by sharing with them the freedom of being together.

The care and the good news of the gospel is personal. So is the resurrection, as personal as it gets, because Christ, we pray, takes us from death to life. We cannot do any good if we depersonalize it. If we enter within this intimacy with Christ, through those who Christ brings our way, the system will change. Nothing really changes from top to bottom. That's how evil is spreading. The goodness comes from the ground. The reverse pyramid, where Christ is at the bottom upholding all with His love. Why don't we start from there and continue that way all the days of our life?



**Please take notice** that the silent meals after Presanctified will be served only on Fridays during Great lent and not on Wednesday as before.

It is our hope that it this will encourage us to stay for the vigil afterward.



### **Every Sunday**

the church at St. Silouane /St John Chapel gathers ,before sunrise to pray

...

**Doors open at 5:30 am.**

Then ...at 7 am the church celebrates the Orthros of the Resurrection, yes a taste of Paska every Sunday!

**Please come to pray, Sunday Orthros with us ,**

**it is the best way to prepare for the Sunday Divine Liturgy.**

### **For the Sick:**

wafaa and sana (cancer)

raj (got knifed)

rejoice

Cassandra's grandmother - Helen

Two children receiving treatment at Sick Kids and their mother Levelin.

Crisent

Ann Brown

Elizabeth

Sifie

Allen

Leon

Mythili

Navpreet; Manpreet; Jamie; Sue; Reishma;Anne; Kevin;Bob; Nazia; Barb;

Angie;Shaibi;Marilyn;Jean;Katie;Janine;Karen;Flora;Patricia;Katrina;Judy;Bob

Romana, Colin, Michael, Peter, Henry, Joanna, George, Kelly;Tom; Candice, Camelia, Romana,

Ricky and his family from back home for the hope of reuniting

Madison and her brother Aaron

### **For health and salvation**

very difficult situation for a family Chirstian from Bangladesh

sandra

peter

angel

bless

Grace

swetha family  
atlaw single mom at shelter  
vernevil family

the family of  
Kenide  
Sathiya  
Sena  
Vinothiny  
Yvienne  
Abdul  
Sakanthalathevy  
Jumke  
Naimi  
Anish

JOSHUA DANIEL  
REALLY HEARTFELT REQUEST FOR PRAYER AS HE IS STRUGGLING TO KEEP ON A GOOD PATH  
Maria Lolita Soliman Torres  
Jonathan  
Richard  
Richard  
Mary  
Elizabeth  
Michael  
Rejoice  
Bill  
Robert  
Alan  
Joanne

deceased (Covid)  
Maria

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET:

To reflect and write the questions below. This is an important project for our community and we want to know what you think about it. Please let me know if you need more details.

1) What do you see around you, in your family, at work, in the world? How are people feeling? What things remained the same and what changed?

Remember, I want to hear what you see and not what the media or the internet sees.

2) What is your understanding of what is going on in the world and in the church today? What meaning do you give to what you see, hear and observe?

3) What do you think is needed? What should the church be in the post Covid world?

Please take time to reflect during these days of lockdown, your words and reflections will make an important contribution to our community life and help us be prepared for the future.