



*From the Sunday of the Blind Man
The Gospel According to John 9:1-38*

"We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

"The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of these do you stone me?" The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we stone you but for blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God." (from the 5th Saturday after Pascha; the Gospel According to John 10:27-38)



The church is witnessing the Light of the world because the church can see. There is nobody else who can see. Because when you see the light, the light also shows you the fabric of the darkness. The parts of the world that were forgotten because the darkness has taken dominion over them. It is not an easy scenery to behold. So that's why it is for those who belong to the church to see

that. Because only the light of the resurrection enlightens with hope the forgotten parts of hell that we struggle with in this life. All other eyes are blind, because if they were not it would lead the soul unto despair.

The church is built on the blood of the martyrs who witness the Light. They saw and they did not despair even when they witnessed with their own life. The apostles witnessed for us the resurrection and so we believe them. Faith comes from listening to the Word of God. Witnessing is preceded by seeing. And a little bit of boldness mingled with courage.

To keep vigil is a way to look for the light, to gaze upon the light in darkness. When we do not keep vigil this way, the darkness spreads and covers our consciousness.

Collectively, we look like a blind man that has sinned today. Because we don't really see anyone watching over the people when this darkness spreads. The lack of a voice, this silence that makes us deaf is more oppressing than the darkness itself, because it keeps the door shut for any hope to come. It seems like hell is strong again because it spreads its darkness and because there is no voices that witness the presence of life within and among those who are suffering here and there.

The lack of watchfulness, the lack of "trezvia"/"nepsis", in the community that was given to us to see and witness does two things: it allows the darkness to spread and, secondly, it makes the life of those who identify with the light, by doing the works of the Father, look insignificant to the point of being ridiculed. We see in the gospel on Saturday that not keeping watch leads to distrusting the goodness that comes our way. And when goodness stops being a personal encounter, everything is regulated by laws and by-laws that become the new obsession of the believers.

"The church courtyard was a space in which fourth-century Christianity appropriated the civic space to the heavenly and redefined it according to the heavenly city". (see Susan Holman: The Hungry are dying; Beggars and Bishops in Roman Cappadocia. P.169 - Between the altar and courtyard)

During our Zoom meeting on Thursday we heard that the Cappadocian fathers were constructing their sermons on two reference points: the altar and the courtyard. The space in between them would be the space that allows Christians to work on their salvation. The courtyard was the place where every person from the city could come. The place of the beggars and the penitents and any stranger. It was the touching point between the sorrow of the city and the joy of the offering. It also was the point where you can watch into the heart of the city and understand its pain.

We feel these days that life is at threat and nobody is watching over it. There is no courtyard by the church. Nobody is noticing or nobody cares. And we end up listening to the voices that condemn life in the first place, that also speak and give moral direction only to misdirect even more.

The same voices that send more people to death through assisted suicide become a moral compass when a nation is mourning; they are the same ones that condemn and keep people trapped in their own illness, the same who divide and segregate the community, the same who harm the unborn, the same who send people at the periferie, the same who tell you that you have the right to die instead of giving life, the same that harm children`s innocence from an early age and teach them how to be controlled, the same who make profit from any suffering, by making

everything look moral. They cause pain and they write the narrative because they are the only ones who speak.

It is true that we should guide our first attention towards our own heart. Because that's the place where the trouble starts and that's also where the healing first comes from. We cannot look into



the heart of the city if we cannot look into our own heart. But to look in one's own heart is not to become captive and obsessed with your own hell but rather to search all with the light that is not yours but brings mercy and hope to both.

This painting was created by a blind man (John Bramblitt)

We see all these things and speak about them not because we made peace with our heart and we know the light from within. We don't know from the papers either or from governmental reports but from people who come through our doors. Lately, it seems there is not one week or not a day where you don't hear someone thinking about suicide. We've seen many things at the mission, or rather in the community over the years, but this is something new, through its recurrence and through its spread. It is alarming to hear no reaction at different levels about this human catastrophe in the making. The generational trend. The fact there seems to be a losing interest in human value when it comes to people. How do we explain this today in the light of the resurrection when our sinful blindness has become our best friend?

"Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out."

The innocence of the blind man in today's gospel comes from God, who prepares in silence those condemned by the system and disregarded because of the way they look, the way they speak, what they wear and what they don't eat. Those who are despised by the system because they lack something and don't look perfect, become the witness for Truth and worshipers of God himself. The gospel tells us today that the innocence that confesses the light within the darkness is kindled and nurtured in a despised soul by those who write the narrative everyday. Christ is

bringing them about at the right moment to confess and speak because they knew the oppression of the darkness without guilt and into that they did not despise God, on the contrary, within that sinless darkness they experienced His personal presence. When confessing so, they are questioned and excluded from the synagogue. Being excluded from the synagogue they become the voice of the church today that breaks the sinful silence with hope for all.

"The man answered, "Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes."

While peeling potatoes with Laura on Friday, she shared with me the first moment she discovered Jesus. It was in a church close to us, somewhere on Sherborne St. The church is now closed, she said. I asked her where her favourite place was. She said here at the mission because nobody forces her to do anything. You can work if you want to work and even talk to somebody if you need to talk.

I asked her about Jesus. Who is He? (this has been the question in the gospels of the week). I was waiting for her to tell me how good He is, but she replied in a different way. She said: "God can be anybody He wants and still be God".

It took me time to think about what she said and ponder more over it. I remembered again what br. Luke said on Wednesday when looking at the gospel of the multiplication of the loaves. How all the 5000 were filled and how everybody had a place on the grass. The image of the kingdom of God where all who lack are filled in a dignified way. It was like God made peace and dwelled on every human heart and still He remained God to feed us.

When we look for the light in darkness we should know that the light though is not something to identify in darkness but something to identify with.

Mothers` Day at Good Neighbors

(Br Luke)

It's Friday at Good Neighbors and Mothers` Day is approaching on the weekend. Since it is the last day of Good Neighbours before the following week, we are on the lookout for mothers. Looking, we find many. A couple comes from across the street, the man is shouting and outgoing, the young woman following behind him like his shadow. She is quietly talking to herself and looking at the ground. While he waits outside the door for his food the man declares loudly about her that "she's not one that is ever going home to the family," "Not ever"! The onlookers laugh. When she goes inside I ask the man if "she is a mother." He says that she has a daughter somewhere. When she comes out there is an opportunity to take her aside privately and give her a small gift for mother's day. She seems surprised.

Later on, a little old woman comes to eat outside the mission. She is 97 years old. She was born in North Korea in the 1930s and left as a schoolgirl to the South. She is almost deaf so we write questions for her on sheets of paper for her to answer. She has a painful inflammation of her

eyelids that makes her life almost unbearable. Today she declares, "I'm not poor. I come here because I am alone." I know she has children somewhere. I ask her for her phone number in case we don't see her for a bit. She says she'll think about it.

Another woman comes with two young children who we haven't seen in over a year. Last time we saw her we were sharing meals together in a crowded hall. She was pregnant then. Now the child is nearly a year old. Things have certainly changed. She is a single mother and her older son is autistic. She has her own mental issues and it cannot be easy for her. One of the volunteers says that the older boy will grow up to be a big guy. "He'll grow up big," she replies "he's stubborn and hard like his father."

Then a woman comes like a streak of colour from the outside. She is here to get as many meals as she can. Someone wishes her a happy mothers` day in the middle of her heist and she acknowledges to everyone that she too is a mother and smiles.

Finally, there is an older lady who stays eating outside the mission most of the day because she can't come in because of COVID. She comes in occasionally to use the washroom, or to pray the paschal hour in the chapel and shout "Yesus Zhif" in her native language (Slovenian).

She is carrying around a small card and gift that we had given her for mother's day when one of her friends says in surprise, "how did you get that? I thought you weren't allowed to see them [her children]." Later on we are talking outside and she shows me pictures of her mother who is 85 years old and has dementia. She shows me pictures of her last birthday party with the almond cake she had made for her mother and a beautiful handcrafted card she had made for her. "If I had more money and more space in my apartment I would take her in to live with me," she says. I believe her.

Faces and smiles.

At the end of the day a volunteer says that he decided to start volunteering because he had so much time on his hands "it's really nice to see new faces, new smiles he said." when you're alone in your room all the time you don't get to see that.

Keep in your prayers the catechumens:

Eliana, Wayne, Atty and Madison, Valerie.

Hearer: Veneranda and her daughter and Zachary

Please pray for:

The sick

James

Vimaladevi

Tharsini and her child.

Sana's Sister going through cancer treatment.

Ann T. Husband

Lynn

Michelle

Emanuel (Mani)

Stefanie

Geoff

Joey

Evangelia

Sophia

Melanie

Césare

Tanya

Piper

Darius

Zamalk; Nelly; Nahla; Mira; Sandral

Brenda

Anna Avairo's daughter going regularly to the emergency room.

Vol Gomaz heart condition and immigration matters

Levlin's two children who are sick

Sri's mother passed away, he is depressed

Helen

BettyAnn and Paul.

Wafaa and Sana sister (cancer)

Rejoice

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

Please pray for health and salvation:

Prayers for Ted's family (incarcerated son to be free)

Dameal asking prayers for his future wife Fathima to be free from addictions

Liz Gibicar asking prayers for her mother

Mom waiting for baby Tejasree

Prashastha

Maria and Dingo

Crisent

Helen

Greta

Elizabeth

Dean

John

Liz

Crisent

Ann Brown

Elizabeth

Sifie

Allen

Leon

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

Aaron, Anastas, Olivia, Gelly, Frank, Eva, George, Rebecca, Andreas, Cathyann, Reigan, Stephanie, James, Peter, Christine; Christian family from Bangladesh, Sandra. Peter, Angel, Bless, Grace, Swetha family; Atlaw single mom at shelter, Vernevil family; the family of Kenide

Saathiya; 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, Bill, Robert, Alan, Joanne

Please pray for the deceased: Pauanasuy Kamthasang, Maria (Covid), Andrei Agostina ,Carminda, Vimaladevi sister; Sri's mother