



Sunday before Holy Cross - John 3:13-17

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.”

The cross reveals to us the love of the Father. The love that forgives, the love that no evil can resist. It is not a human love, it is the love of God for us. Revealed through the cross in the obedience of his Son. The Son reveals to us the love of the Father because He partakes of it. He dwells in it. “I could not do that, ” said Joanna on Friday after we read the gospel together. To give up on your son... That’s hard”. It was the testimony of the one who pondered on this love, who knows his reality that enters into one’s soul and does not let the heart settle down in comfort. This love stirs the waters of our heart. Like a watery leaven that gives life to the flour. It is precisely where life is coming from... We are not asked to understand the love that forgives from the cross but to look upon it. Not to pretend that it does not exist, not to avoid it but to gaze upon it...

“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived”. Numbers 21:9

The reality of our life today is bitten by the serpent. The poison went deep within our bones and flesh. Inflicted by others or self determined by us. We literally see people dying before their time because of this bite. However, the illness is carried and treated with despair or indifference until it becomes self-sufficient in itself. There is no remedy within the healthcare system for that and a common understanding is developing that the serpent is a pet that has its own needs and has to be accommodated.

The gospel tells us today that there is healing for the flesh and there is life for the dry bones. Not to look within ourselves for an answer but to behold the cross, the love that forgives. To stay within the tension that heals and abandon the comfort given to us by the illusion of being entombed. Where is the Son lifted up for us today ? Where is the beautiful sight that heals? Where is the tension that touches in us the self sufficiency of self destructing yourself? The cross is lifted high and publicly, never hidden. So it could be seen by all who are bitten. There is today real knowledge of the love that forgives. There are witnesses and people who bear in their flesh the marks of the cross, revealing to us the love of the Father. The illness is not without remedy. Death is not an option.

A communal witness

C. came late on Friday afternoon. I recognized him as he entered the church. More than a year ago he lost his friend who was serpent bitten by the illness of addictions. He looked more burdened than the last time ... We offered food and the possibility to listen to the gospel of the day on which we were going to reflect as it is customary on Friday afternoons. He chose to stay, have some food and listen.

He spoke immediately after Chris read the gospel. He could not wait for the second reading. He spoke out of the goodness of his heart that makes him to be more connected with the reality of his own pain. And how much pain was there! Everything he said was a public confession of Truth from a suffering soul that while being tormented in hell would not curse God in order to die. But instead he remembers Him in order to live, even though he has no hope that his life would change. "I do not know what it means to be born again". The only thing that he blamed God for is the gift of free will. This is the cause of my trouble.

His current story was about losing his newborn son to Children's Aid because the mother had a bad addiction, among other things. He did not blame anybody for that but himself for not being able to put his life in order. He cried as he talked. He literally came that day to church to confess his pain and to look for forgiveness. "I knew that it was too late to come and find food, but something brought me here inside. It told me to come."

C said other things in his confession. It took us a few silent minutes to be able to carry on with the reflection. It was not just for the pain and his suffering that we had no words, but more for his dignity and forgiveness that came through his pain. It seemed unreal for a soul to be in such great trouble and to be able to not blame anybody but only to confess this pain and to be touched by forgiveness with no promise for a better life.

You have to learn to die with Christ on the cross. (St Francis to St Clare when she was 18 and they met for the first time).

C did not choose to die with Christ on the cross. As he said, he grew up reading and memorizing the Bible and he fell on the path of addictions, to a point where he no longer finds any pleasure in it. It is still puzzling for us to see in a soul so broken so much faith and love. Is it his love we see or the love that embraces him on the cross? We do not know, what we know is that love is revealed through us through his cross. It is a mystery how man can be so close to Christ, how His cross can become so personal to a human soul.

Community life

"...Yes, my faith is as a mustard seed, and if that is so, so too may my hope be, and all I require is a tiny grain of hope." (reflection on the gospel - Elisha)



This week Coleen has been drawing the crosses on the antidoron bags. It is like an anticipation for the feast on Tuesday evening. The cross she drew let the light of the resurrection come through already. The cross that reveals the kindness of the love that forgives. This is the light that heals. This is the beautiful sight that is revealed to us in order to be healed and live.

This is her cross that she carries with love, so that we can see it every time she comes to the mission and be healed. On Friday, at lunch, she said that she had never been so still. Her hands stopped shaking for a second. It was like a miracle that lasted for a little while.

Joanna celebrated this week, on Thursday, 10 years since being chrismated at St John's. She is the witness of the life that has been abundant in the community from the very beginning. On Friday morning we prayed together at the liturgy and we rejoiced. We'll do it again on Sunday. We look forward, as she said, to celebrate again in another 10 years.

On Friday we prayed at the memorial service for Elisabeth who departed to the Lord one year ago. Joanna spoke about her on Friday before lunch, how they went swimming together when they were kids and about the many moments they shared at the mission. Elisabeth was baptized at the mission and she was a kind soul that forgave many. If you want to recognize her in the picture, as you enter the office, look for the woman with a child's face, who holds the icon of the Mother of God in her hands. The picture was taken at the refuge. Memory Eternal!

Mission church collections for Sunday, Sept 4 2022: Donations \$360, candle box \$41.

Prayer list for the sick and those who have recovered: Omar; Elisabeth; Ben, Kim; George; Bernadette, Maria Becatam ;Seena; Ocean ,Tony, Nikitha; Dianne; Joy; Susie; Alex; Maurice; Lynn; Molly; Thomas; Varghese; Delia; Leela; Mary; Tanya; Basma; Aditi; Larry; Darius; Lori; Lisa; Cindy; Césare; Fatima; Debbie; Donald; Hermina; Råul; EK Thomas; Nebu; Evangelia; Sarah; Shelley; Bill; Ruth, Kristian and Frank; Maria; Binja ; Mike; Luke; Anusia; Lavalin's son; Sana; Father George Patrick, and Father Michael Miklos/Pani Karen Miklos; Dominique and her daughter; Mike; Luke; Arjuna; Joy; Susie; Alex; Lynn; Molly'; Thomas; Alex; Fathima; Frank; Chris; Evlokia; Mikayla and Luca; Karunawathi, Gloria, Vijekumari, Ronda, and Regina; Delia; Valerie; Tom; Traian; Peter; Marco; Kim; Tihomir; Kate; Payton Clark; Sana, and her family in Egypt; Isaiah; Mary; Sydney; Peter; Christine; Stephanie; Iulia; Jason; Sophia; Alexander; Charles; Tom; Paul; Phillip and his wife Juliet; Cristeena; Ann brown's daughter; Silvia; Jincy; Shiron Crisreen; Allain; Seena and her husband; Waheeda and children; Faizah; Shirin and her family; Cristina; Daniela, Jerry; Delia ; Ragaie; Victoria; Mike; Farida; Roselyne and family ; Ana; Cornelia; Leon; Jerry; Ocean; Gloria; Anne; Marina; Marie; Edemene; Joanna and family; Rejoice; Romana, Coline, Michael, Peter, Henry, George, Kelly; Tom; Marina; Kumari; Susan; child James; Aaron; Sylvia; Fr Jonathan; Tharshini and her two children; Ann Tyron and her family; Sandra Gomaz's children; Sameen; Sophia; Amy; Swetha and children; Charitha; Jitesh's parents; Demene; Carol; Gloria; Hawa Bibi; Vimaladevi; Fr. John and Pani Marie; Lynn; Michelle; Emanuel(Mani); Stefanie; Geoff; Joey; Evangelia; Sophia; Melanie; Tanya; Piper; Darius; Zamalk; Nelly; Nahla; Mira; Sandral; Brenda; Vol; Gomaz; ; Helen; Paul; Wafaa.

Please pray for the deceased: Tom; Fred; Shrin; Andre; Andree; Akhir; Arjuna; Dillon; Elena; Pani Mary; Rejoice`s mother; Edmund; Pani Eleanor; Fr John; Alexandru; Constantin; Robert; Fr Aurel; Georgi; Rada; Petre; Stela; William; Samuel; Debbie; John; Amy, Willie; Dave`s wife; Ana; Shirin`s cousin in Jordan; Father Lawrence; Dave; Anne Tyran`s father; Edith, Sr. Mary Magdalene; Joice; BettyAnn; James; Pauanasuy Kamthasang; Maria; Andrei; Agostina; Carminda; Vimaladevi's sister; Sri's mother; Carol's Mother and 23 year old nephew; Demene`s mother, Dalalzaki.

Sept 12-18

Tuesday	8:30 am 6:00pm	Morning Prayer 6pm αγρυπνία - agrypnia for the feast of the Universal exaltation of the Cross (vespers with litya/Orthros procession with the cross/ Divine Liturgy)	Thursday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Jesus Prayer
			Friday	7:00 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm	Orthros Noon Hours Jesus Prayer
			Saturday	9:00 am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 4:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Vespers/Dinner	Sunday	6:00 am 8:00 am 8:30 am	Jesus Prayer Orthros Divine Liturgy

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We are an apostolate of the ecumenical patriarchate "Mother Church of Christ's poor"
under the Omophorion of Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

