



The last judgement - Matthew 25:31-46

“The Lord said ... “

Reading the gospel today, we hear the words of Jesus, and we can tell, from his voice, how much He loves the poor. God really loves them, and this is the Truth of this broken, sinful world that would heal us all if we opened our heart to it. This personal love of the Father for the “little ones” who live in abandonment today meets their pain that is untouched by the kindness of man. We see too many times at the mission the pain of those that today remain hungry, thirsty and naked with no home. We see and ask if indeed the personal love that Christ has for them is made manifest to them within their heart? At times we doubt that, and we don’t know how to share with them the truth revealed to us today. On Friday, the person who refused to leave the mission after 4:00 pm was someone who needed clothes, food and welcoming within a home. However, even if all these would have been given to her, one could see that it would not have been enough. We tried with other people in the past and it did not work. The things she had seen and the things she did herself brought heaviness to her heart, keeping her away from decent human personal interaction. Her name was Street. She said she goes by that name, and she spelled it to me when she saw I was surprised to hear it. However, with all her distress, something in her changed when she was listened to. She wanted to speak. We were both trying to make the best we could from a human encounter that was looking for some Truth, having little chance for that to happen. “You know, I tried to be as honest as I can with you.” Who would have known that within this insignificant endeavour is the place where God acts?

‘Come, O blessed of my Father...’

George was asking on Friday who are those who are blessed. Do we include those who do good often, who do it all day, 24/7? Do those who do good occasionally qualify for the kingdom at the end? What if you do it only once? It was normal for George to ask that, the one who does a lot always wonders if that was enough.

We did not have clear answers for him on Friday. Today we understand that God blesses the little we do so that it grows and multiplies. So much so that the kingdom of heaven becomes a home for the heart of man. It is within small acts of presence within the community that God acts and builds His kingdom. We cannot see much because we don’t do much, that’s why we don’t see the results in people around us or within the city where the poor get more humiliated with every day going by. But the little we do, if it is done in honesty, for the sake of the love that God has for the poor, is multiplied through God’s blessing. It becomes the place where all want to dwell at the end, whatever we might become, sheep or goats, we never lose the desire to be with Christ.

“Take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak” | Cor 8:13

This liberty of ours in becoming a goat is based on an ongoing ignorance of the pain of the brother who is overlooked by all. We become part of the pack. The one who is hungry is so because nobody gives him food. His hunger is an abomination to God and nobody cares. He has been passed by many before coming my way. And I am doing the same. And the worst of it is that we know how it feels to be hungry, to be thirsty, to be humiliated. We know how it is to be rejected. Why is not this a teaching moment that makes us sensitive to the pain of others since we experienced that ourselves? ***“Do to others what you would have them do to you”*** Mat 7:12

We experience in our life both the violence of rejection and the kindness of love. Both with different measures and at different extents. The gospel tells us today that none is an excuse not to radically choose Christ, not to care with love for your brother who comes your way. We are not judged on how much we received but rather on the little we shared.

Abuse, that happens because of the sin of man, always justifies the choice to say no to any form of Truth within a human encounter between brothers and sisters. It justifies saying no to a new attempt to believe that man can approach another in honesty. The memory of being hurt is fresh within the mind and it did not lose its bitter taste in the mouth who desires the Body of Christ. How can you desire sweetness if the memory of food is bitter?

On Friday the stubborn woman whose soul was so marked by the suffering of the world, looked for genuine interaction, in all honesty. She did justify her sins through the things that were done to her, but still she would not leave the church until a priest would talk to her so she could make a confession on the stairs of the church, being as honest as she could be.

The good news of the Last judgment that we hear today is that there is always little hope in us ready to be acted upon. And God is merciful, and He does not look at the measure but rather always approaches us in vulnerability, giving back to us the sweetness of life through the poor. He does not ask us to give what we don't have. And more than that, he does not ask us to give to those who hurt us already, bringing despondency within the heart. At the proper time He brings our away the person who genuinely rejoices within the heart for the little we have, who does not judge us based on the quality of love, who does not reject the gift we share that is not worthy of receiving. To experience once real gratitude for the little hope we have in us is enough to make up for all the rejection that has happened, and the one that is yet to come.

Before being abandoned by the disciples (see gospel on Wednesday), Jesus encountered the love of the woman who washed His feet with her hair. That little love prepared him for his burial. It was enough to take with Him in the tomb where the resurrection happened. Even Christ received a simple act of kindness before being abandoned on the cross by all. How much more we would receive, who are so fragile in our desire to care and easily hurt when rejected. The encounter with the poor today is the marriage banquet that God prepares for the man in heaven when we all can love without the fear of being rejected out of little love. The last judgement comes after the encounter with the first genuine act of care.

February 20 - 26

Tuesday	8:30 am 7:30pm	Morning Prayer Psalms Study – via Zoom	Wednesday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 4:00pm 6:30 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Vespers NO BRIDGES
Thursday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Jesus Prayer	Friday	7:00 am 12:30 pm 2pm	Orthros Noon Hours Jesus Prayer
Saturday	9:00 am	Morning Prayer	Sunday	7:00 am 8:30 am 6:30pm	Orthros Divine Liturgy Vesper Service of Forgiveness – We start Lent Together



St Silouan Chapel at St John's Mission
155 Broadview Ave. Toronto, ON M4M 2E9
T: 416-466-1357 E: info@stjohnsmmission.org W: stjohnsmmission.org
St Zoticos Orthodox Church at Good Neighbours Mission
193 Markham Rd Scarborough, ON M1J 3C3
T: 647-358-4105



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

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