



"Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down ... and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."

In the drawing (left), the parent is alone with the suffering of his child and God. Nobody else is around.

We've seen too many times before this excruciating pain of the parent who is abandoned to despondency, through the lack of faith of the community. In the case of the Canaanite woman some weeks ago, the difference was that she had great faith. In the father's case, Eliana said on Friday, it is Jesus who invites him to believe. Just as you would encourage a child to walk for the first time: "You can do it". He needed reassurance and encouragement. And he does it.

The parent is alone with God and with the suffering son because Jesus' disciples failed to help him. It is the failing of a generation who lost its faith. And this loss of faith torments the younger one with the evil spirits. The gospel tells us that when we see children tormented by the evil today – and how much can we keep seeing without crying? - and the lonely pain of the parent, it is for us to believe that this sorrowful reality is given to us to live because the community who desired to become holy ended up without faith.

Most of the time we look at today's gospel and we are amazed by the little faith of the father, and we reflect on the complexity of faith in general. But this is not necessarily the thing that touches Jesus with pain. ***"O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?"*** It is rather the lack of faith of the community that is called to be holy, that gives dynamis to the whole scene. Faith is not something we can theorize or conceptualize. We can be of little faith (Mt 8:26) or of great faith (Mt 8:13) or faithless (today's gospel). In the gospel, the great faith is revealed to us by those living outside the law (the Canaanite woman -Mt 15:21- and the centurion in Mt 8:26). This great faith comes, as much as we can see, out of a deep love for those who were in suffering. Those of great faith, because they have the reality of love within their heart, know God and how He can break any conventions when it comes to attending to those who are afflicted (see readings - Annunciation vigil). They pray to Him knowing who He is.

The father also loved his son. He remained faithful to the suffering of his son until he was healed. He brings him to Jesus with fear and hope. His little faith is the result of him living within a faithless generation that was chosen to be faithful to the love God has for those who are afflicted and destitute. He experienced this lack of faith in the abandonment of his suffering child and that made him have doubts. At the end, it is the little faith and the pain of the father that exposes the lack of faith of the community who was called by Christ and trusted to become holy.

Today, we know when a generation is without faith: when we see that the suffering of the innocents has become indifference in the eyes of those chosen to care. The indifference of those chosen today to care for the afflicted is tormenting with evil the life of the little ones. Faith cannot be born out of indifference for the wounded brother but only from the care and love we start seeing within our own soul. And that takes a lot of prayer and fasting from your own self-determination. Through prayer we invite God to take us out from our own self because we have abstained from our own autonomy and become ready to hear the pain of the poor. ***"I will now rise up, because the poor are being hurt"*** (Ps12:5). Prayer and fasting bring about mortification of oneself.

Jesus does not condemn his disciples. He reveals to them the remedy for the evil that has taken over the lives of the innocents from an early age. He speaks in Truth with them and through that we see that He believes in the repentance of His disciples; he trusts the love they have in their heart. The gospel continues with Jesus revealing to His disciples where the lack of faith of this generation leads; to His cross, where the One without blemish will be crucified. It is the resurrection that ends the gospel, where those who lost their faith today have become the body of Christ. The universal healing of the communion of the saints.

Why going to confession is Good news!

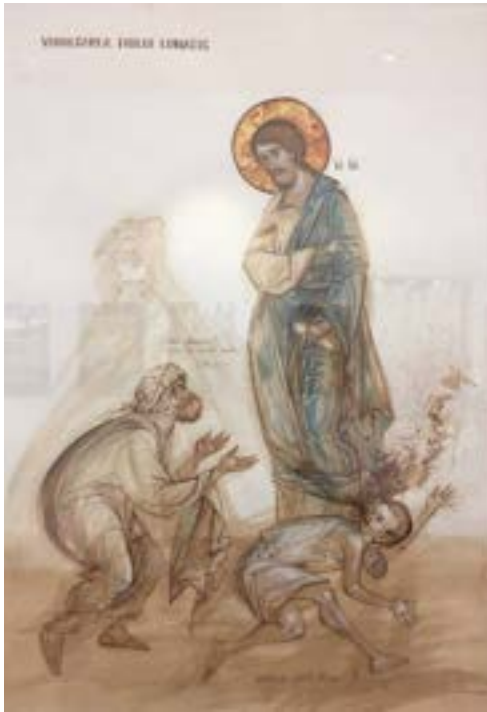
A child breaks a precious vase and runs to his mother crying, confessing what he has done. The mother, after letting the child confess what he has done, hugs him and forgives him.

Is this what confession is all about? In part it is so. The experience of being loved and forgiven. Human experiences of forgiveness echo Divine forgiveness. "The Father is like a father who had two sons..."

There is in the sacrament of confession God's forgiveness, which opens another unheard-of possibility. Forgiveness in confession releases us from the history of our sin: we are not defined by our faults. The sacrament also calls us to repair the "vase". We are called to repair it, making it even better than before. What we call the Epitimia are prescriptions that are meant to heal, repair what we have broken. Confession asks of us first of all to believe that the priest speaks words of infallible truth—"Your sins are forgiven".

Second, the sacrament calls to live out this truth, to go in peace and in turn forgive, heal, restore, in all those places and relationships where we have broken the image of God. We can do this not because we have the strength, but by living out the grace received in the sacrament of confession. "Go in peace, your sins are forgiven" means that from now on, what we may suffer or whatever burdens us, whatever word we may say or whatever act we may do, is part of this" repair work." Living out forgiveness heals others also. pRoberto

Mission church collections of 1 Sunday : March 19 2023, Donations \$200, Candle collections \$50, candle/wine \$30



Community life:

- **Confessions this Friday , March 31**

It is the custom in healthy church communities to invite a guest priest to preach and hear confessions once a year.

This year, Father Constantin from a Romanian church in Montreal, will come and serve with father Nicolaie for the weekend. Fr Constantin is a friend of father Nicolaie and has visited the mission in the past.

On Friday night March 31, fr Constantin will hear confessions during the Akathist Service.

This is an opportunity for all of us to go to confession to another priest. This is a good custom, and we should make sure we take advantage of this opportunity.

- José and Christina are leaving on Sunday. We pray that they will land safely in Spain where the spring is real and not deceiving like in Canada. We'll always

keep them in our prayers, and we know the poor will be in their heart. During their stay with us, they have helped us in numerous ways, never shying away from any challenge. And we certainly were not shy in making our needs known to them. We will miss them most during our Friday's gospel sharing. Their love for the Word and the Truth made all of us attentive when reading the gospel. We hope they will not easily forget the community and all the good things completed for the sake of the gospel.

- On Friday morning, during the canon of the cross, we heard about the three crosses on the hill, one for Christ and two for the thieves. In the afternoon S. came at the mission, wearing three crosses around his neck as usual: "It represents all of us". He was in deep distress. I had never seen him like that before, even though I have seen him in situations that got him banned him for years. We took a chance to see if we could help. He did not have a phone to call his parole appointment. That would lead him back inside, he said. He walked all over places, and nobody let him use a phone. He thought he had lost everything when he came to us. He did not even know we were open. He hoped. He was able to do his phone appointment and that calmed him down. At the end, he attended the gospel reflection that ended with his words, contradicting another opinion in the room: "There is always hope".

- On Friday, in the chapel, a young person declared categorically her lack of faith and the hate she felt for her own soul. It was not her faith that brought her to us, but her friend. They were both in pain because of the distress of the other. In this hopeless reality, they realized they loved each other. One could see how real that was. A young generation that was taught to hate its own soul has love for one another. This is the path that takes those who are afflicted from the captivity of this self hate that was inflicted by the lack of faith of others. This love is real, and it needs guidance and blessing from God so the young couple that is afflicted today could rejoice in the reality of marriage. How hard is it for the community to find a path for that? It is hard to answer, but here is where the creativity of the church is called to act.
- On Wednesday afternoon, after we heard in Isaiah that the generation without faith has made a covenant with death, we asked before lunch how often we think about death and how that changes us.
There was so much faith shared around the room that revealed the hearts of those who love life and the Father who brought it unto us. Laura said that she says a prayer every night since she was a child, where she trusts that God will take her soul to heaven if she dies in her sleep. “I say that every night”, said Laura with a smile.

Special Lenten service for this week

Wednesday March 29 6:30-9:30 PM

Great Canon of St. Andrew
with reading of the life of St. Mary of Egypt
(dates from Palestine served)

N.B. we will start a little earlier than 6:30

Friday March 31

6:30 PM Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
Silent Agape meal with reading

8:30 PM Akathist Service

Confessions heard by Father Constantin

Vigil is kept until Midnight


Sunday April 2

guest preacher Fr. Constantin



March 27 – April 2

Tuesday	8:30 am	Morning Prayer	Wednesday	4:00 pm 6:30 pm	Vespers Great Canon of St. Andrew with reading of the life of St. Mary of Egypt
Thursday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Jesus Prayer	Friday	7:00 am 6:30 pm 8:30pm	Orthros Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, Silent Agape meal with reading Akathist Service, Confessions heard by Father Constantin, Vigil is kept until Midnight
Saturday	9:00am	Morning Prayer	Sunday	7:00 am 8:30 am	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

