



"Then she came and worshiped him, saying, 'Lord, help me.'"

During our gospel reflection on Friday, K. said that we should pray all the time for mercy. He said it is hard to have a relationship with God. I think he meant that he felt God is demanding. "We are sinners, and we should pray for mercy all the time ... all the time. And besides that, He is very busy, with all the things that happen now in the world, that's why He works at times through people, through his friends." K. keeps repeating all the time that he is not religious. He

did not want to say anything on the gospel. He just happened to be there because he had come to thank us for a sleeping bag we had given to his room mate, and to ask for another one for himself, if possible. He was happy to receive some sweaters as well because he had been wearing the same one all winter. He always says he is not religious, but it seems that he keeps praying all the time. He had just received a rosary from us, for which he had been asking for a while. His answer was maybe triggered by one volunteer's reaction who could not understand why Jesus had to humiliate the woman. "Isn't God love? Why did He treat her that way, to make her a dog? The woman was in distress". He spoke like somebody who has seen humiliation up close. And the gospel must have triggered something in him. He was very honest in his question, trying to understand.

Z. thought that the Canaanite woman had the faith of a dog. "Here in Canada people buy special food for dogs, back in Ethiopia a dog eats by faith. They come around the tables when people eat and wait to be fed with what is left. The woman was the same, she knew that at the end there will be something left for her. There are always crumbs left at any table. She knew Who God is and how He feeds his people. "She had the faith of a dog"

How did the woman know who God is? She was outside the law, a typical outsider, as J. said on Friday. She did not have a covenantal relationship with God. He did not reveal Himself to her community the way He did to the chosen people of the house of Israel. Where is this knowledge coming from? The gospel tells us that she worshiped Him, being insistent in asking for mercy, knowing that mercy is touching the heart of man at the end. When the meal is over in heaven there are crumbs falling to those who are suffering in hell, being tormented by evil spirits. They don't come down because of gravity but by faith alone. The faith of those who love while being in distress. Elisha thought that the crumbs are the Word of God. If that's true, and it seems to be, then the gospel really brings the good news to those who are in hell. Could the faith of the Canaanite woman be a prefiguration of the resurrection itself? Or a witness of that before happening? The faith of the saints always allows for the light to shine through the cracks in a petrified humanity... The saints who live at the margins.

"But he did not answer her a word."

On Wednesday evening, we listened to a talk about the negative silence and about the danger of it turning into a form of mutism mingled with anger and hate for the other. The Canaanite woman is quite the opposite, she opens to God and prays to Him while experiencing a deep form of alienation. In the gospel even God seems to distance Himself from her. The trauma of her life, the humiliation she endured and the pain of being a suffering mother living in a community who does not have a covenant with God, who does not have the intention to do good together, did not make her cope with reality by becoming silent within herself. This is what humiliation does to the human soul in the end. It takes away the dignity of being human. What is then left for you to say? And to Whom, since even God seems to be silent to your distress.

We do not know what came first in her life, the suffering from an early age or the love for her daughter who was severely demon possessed. But the mingling of both brought to her soul the knowledge of God. By faith alone she was going to be fed by the Word of God because she had not yet seen the real fresh bread.

On Wednesday, we heard fr Enzo speak to us about how Christ descends within our own soul to evangelize the deepest parts of our being. The places where we don't want to go. He began by saying that over 80 years of living, out of which more than 50 in monastic life, brought him to this understanding of the lifegiving silence that opens the heart towards God and each other desiring and longing for unity. Giving birth to the communication that is life. The Word comes out of His silence when He creates man.

The gospel tells us today that the fruits of faith gathered in 50 years of monasticism and the fruits of a life lived in distress while loving the one who is possessed by the spirits of this world are somehow similar because they both bring about the knowledge of God and open the heart to a dialogue with God and each other that eventually heals the suffering soul.

These life experiences are not parallel, they come to the same broad place that enlarges the heart. They encounter each other in Christ. And by encountering each other they also change places, so nothing remains unevangelized in us.

Elisha said on Friday that her faith stays the same, when she finds herself in deep distress and when she finds the silence by the water and the gray sky. Because the word of God visits us in both instances.

What about us? Those who did not suffer much, and did not love much those who are in despair being tormented by evil spirits? What shall we do?

On Friday, before lunch, we asked people to share something they were thankful for. It was surprising to see that most of the people were thankful for the church. Both people who volunteer and those who work for a short or longer period. They were all very honest. It is true, the community offers hospitality and good meals (we had just broken fresh bread from bakery) and a place where there is silence and prayer to partake of. For those of us who have seen good things and share at the table, our little faith should make us always attentive to those who come at the end of the day. They seem lost and tormented most of the time, but they always carry with them a word. If close enough, we'll be able to listen to it, and the little faith can find a good reason to grow. And for the real dialogue to take place.

Mission church collections of 2 Sunday Feb 4 & Feb 11: Mission Donations \$592, candle/wine \$20, candle box \$149.55 + \$5USA

Prayer request - please pray for:

Durcy family as they lost their 19-year-old sister due to overdose.

Fazila and family. They lost their 16-year-old special needs son.

Gloria.

Vijekumai's brother.

Charly – discharged from hospital.

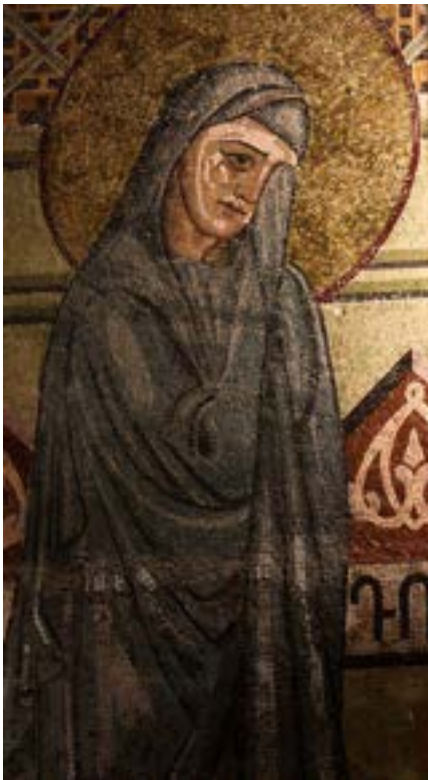
Vasiliki and her family.

Announcements:

Tuesday, Feb 20, 7:30 pm: Psalm study (by Zoom) - Ps. 14, verse 5

Wednesday, Feb 21, 6:30 pm - Bridges:

- Derek Finkle speaks about harm reduction (in person presentation)
- He is the author of an article published in the National Post in Nov. 2023- “I worked at a safe injection site, and it was disturbing,” and he lives in our neighborhood.
- this is a very important social issue that has many ramifications for our community.
- Please plan to attend, it is important for us to be all on the same page regarding this popular ideology



Friday, Feb 23, 7 am - Orthros: a good place to learn how to chant the psalms and one of the beautiful liturgies of the orthodox church. First time attendee get a free coffee and scone.

Next Sunday, Feb 25, 10 am - Typica with communion at St Zoticos

Thank you to all those who came and supported our 7th anniversary of the foundation of Good Neighbours drop in and St Zoticos mission.

Remember to use the antidoron and not Kleenex tissues, they are wasteful and also don't prevent spilling crumbs on the floor.

It happens at times for mothers to come alone to church and to cry because of the distress of their children ... This week it happened maybe more than before. Whatever the distress or the loss, the sorrow is always the same because the mother loves the children with an infinite measure. They always think that their love is not enough and cannot heal completely. That's why, for small or large distresses, that infinite love becomes prayer to God. If we can hear it during the week, how much more can God listen to it in heaven?

Project Rachel at St. Mary of Egypt Refuge
Providing post-abortion help and healing in a confidential and non-judgmental way.


St. Mary of Egypt refuge is offering a Project Rachel **retreat between April 19-21, 2024**, for women who are suffering the effects of abortion. We have been offering Project Rachel retreats for more than fifteen years. At our retreats, we welcome women whose pain has been silenced and denied by the world. See our website (stmarysrefuge.org/rachel), and phone or e-mail us in confidence: 289 691 6840 or projectrachel@stmarysrefuge.org.



February 19 - 25

Tuesday	8:30 am 7:30 pm	Morning Prayer Psalms Study – via zoom	Wednesday	4:00 pm 6:30 pm 8:00pm	Vespers Bridges Compline
Thursday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Jesus Prayer	Friday	7:00 am 12:30pm 2:00pm	Orthros Noon Hours Jesus Prayer
Saturday	9:00am	Morning Prayer	Sunday	7:00am 8:30am	Orthros Divine Liturgy

Sunday, Feb 25, 10 am - Typica with communion at St Zoticos



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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

