



“The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom.”

The poor man was left alone through one man's ignorance; therefore, God sends angels to allow him to taste the fruit of communion. As Lazarus is carried by the angels into the bosom of Abraham, we remember all the people who die alone nowadays. Unattended. People on the streets, in hospitals, and in subsidized housing, who, at times, are found several days after their passing. There are those who die because of overdose and the unborn children who have not yet discovered the fruit of communion, or those who die in zones of war and conflict, who lost the fruit of

communion too soon, before having it has become mature. For all of them and many others, the gospel tells us today that angels are sent to care for one's soul. To carry the soul into communion with the Father. Not one angel, but many. Because God does not spare their toil in caring for the soul of the poor man who dies alone. The prodigal Son who did not wish to leave Him has become prodigal because of a broken communion, a casualty of the war that man started with God alone. The death of a poor man that happens away from the eyes of the world, in the lonely suffering of his soul, opens the heavens, so the angels might come. And it gives grace to humanity, because Lazarus desired to stay and be fed with crumbs out of for his neighbour. And if their death does indeed speak to our soul, we should know that happens through grace, that pours down from heaven on sinners, for the sake of the poor man's love for the one who has no eyes to see him.

On Friday, we received the visit of a man who spent most of the day in the chapel. He was soaking wet, and he spent the time half praying, half sleeping. He stayed until the ambulance eventually came, at the very end of the day. He had come out of prison on Thursday, and he had been on the streets since then. He had no place to go and no family to return to. He wanted to stay away from addictions, which, as he said, had poisoned his life (this is as much as we could understand in between the tears and sobs which shook his body). He was in visible physical and emotional pain. Tears were constantly streaming from his eyes. They might have been caused by symptoms of drug withdrawal or pneumonia. The paramedics who came were not sure. When we could understand him, we heard him saying: “I am bad, I am

very bad. I have no place to go. I don't want to die. Please help me ...You know Lazaros, the one who was resurrected from the dead ... I don't want to die ...”

The prayer of the poor sick man in the chapel was interceding for all of us. It is the prayerful answer to the desire for death that marks a wealthy Canadian society. This is the hope we receive this week, after the presentation we heard on Wednesday about euthanasia in Canada. The humanity of today, which believes to be “healthy” and doing good, just before revealing its desire for death, is echoed by the prayer for life of the sinful homeless beggar, full of modern sores that cannot be healed with traditional medicine. The prayer of the poor man who dies alone is the hope we hold today against this self-inflicted evil.

“... between us and you a great gulf has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.”

Like our Lazarus on Friday, the illness of the poor today is harsh and puts more distance between people. The crumbs they eat today are mingled with “poisonous medicine” that takes away tears. So that they may not cry. At times the dehumanization of modern poverty of the human soul brings humanity on unwatered grounds. And the disinterest towards the other becomes an abyss. However, it has always been like that, only that today the desire to die of the modern man, further isolates the life of the poor. It has become repugnant to him. The poor sick man wishes to live, even with a quality of life so low that it becomes an affront and a blasphemy to an ideology that considers life inferior to death. But what is blasphemy for today's ideology is the precious pearl in God's eyes, who discovers it at the proper time and sells everything else in order to keep it.

However, we can recognize in our own lives as well the gulf we see in today's gospel. The one who is healthy is always inclined to look down on the one who is poor and sick or to avoid him completely. It happens everywhere and even within the family and community life. Humanity has a strong dynamic and wants to fight and win. It does not like those who lose. It does not like the lowly place and does not want to associate with them. It is the same in our relationships, in our own life. When we feel strong, we despise the weak. And we don't want to become like them, because that would make us powerless and vulnerable to the offering of the other one. An offering that might never come, or if it does, it comes as crumbs or leftovers. But this is exactly what Christ receives from us: crumbs of love for the Creator. And that happens only if He stays close enough to us and He is attentive when we eat alone. But it cannot be so for us, we would rather die than be at the mercy of others, at the mercy of the one we love.

That's why, the gulf is deepening. It is human nature and it does not change. The gospel today does not give us any false hope when it comes to this. As Carlos noticed on Friday, when we reflected on the gospel, not even the resurrection moves the heart of the rich towards his brother, towards Christ who reveals himself in the life of the poor.

So where is the real hope? ...



On Wednesday morning, as he came through the doors, Johan informed us that one of the volunteers seemed to be in a manic state. She had too much energy, she was all over the place, talking to everyone, very active, very present, very energetic, to put it mildly. However, it was this elderly woman who noticed outside two young people who were carrying each other, without the help of the angels, looking half asleep, like many other people we see at the mission. His name was Adam. He seemed very young, and he said he had just been discharged from hospital. He had been in a coma, because of drugs. He wanted to get treatment, but this was not available for him. He wanted to live, but again, this option was not available for him. He was half naked, wearing the hospital clothes which were revealing parts of his body. He wanted help, he needed help. But in this paralyzed world, help would not come. It was the “manic” elderly woman who brought all the clothes they needed and literally clothed both, with strength and determination. She had words of support and practical instructions to offer them. “You know, when I was young, I worked in Emergency. I know what you need but they don’t give that to you now. Take a coffee, that helps. And keep walking. Come here in the morning and eat and rest. I know, I was homeless in the past. We all have our stories. Love, remember,” she said to the girl. “You are beautiful and kind. Remember that.” The next day, the young couple followed her instructions, and they came to have breakfast in the morning. No miracle happened; angels did not come. They did not need to this time. This miracle lasted one day. We pray that it will last forever.

Humanity is broken apart by this gulf. It was only Christ who conquered death, which came as a consequence of our broken communion. In order to repair communion with humankind, He descended to the place of the poor, initiating our forgiveness through them. He dies as a poor man on the Cross, and He resurrected the poor man with Him. In him, the first signs of the Resurrection are revealed, because he is the first to die despised by the world. Christ gives this power to His Bride, the Church. It is the Church that breaks open hearts so they may see each

other across the gulf. The Church bridges and builds communion, because she loves Christ, who died and rose first in the poor, so that His life might reach all humanity.

The Church becomes the new reality where grace works through our weaknesses to bring about communion, not through our strength, but through our weaknesses, because Christ comes in humility. He is perfect and does not need weakness. We, however, are imperfect; yet when we become humble, we allow grace to work through our weaknesses. Like the elderly woman who seemed manic to Johan, grace worked through her to make us attentive to the young couple who needed more than a cup of coffee that day. Who longed for help but could not speak or move, who could make no sign at all.

If the Church does not wish to become an empty spiritual tomb, feeding only on people's hope and faith, she must break open hearts before the end of time, before the coming of the angels. For she has been given the power to forgive, to clothe, and to learn humility by being vulnerable, feeding and drinking on God alone. Thus, the acts of mercy become the prayer of repentance for those who do not repent, for those who have seen, yet covered their eyes to the suffering born of an unfulfilled love in the heart of the poor.

Community life:

During our reflection on Friday, we discussed why the rich man in the Gospel has no name. Many offered their thoughts, and the Fathers of the Church have spoken about it too. But what Eliana said made sense to us: "The rich man does not say his name. He does not want people to know where he lives or what his address is. He doesn't want to be bothered and he is afraid. Perhaps Jesus simply respected his wish."

On Saturday at 1:00 p.m., we will have our **Volunteer Appreciation Day**. We will celebrate the love that many have shown for the poor man throughout the year. Please come and join them. We all love this feast. This year, Brother Luke has rented a larger space so that we can eat and dance together. So that we can share a meal at the table. Please come and rejoice! We celebrate the goodness of life, lovingly cared for through the hearts of many generous people.



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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



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