

St. John the Compassionate Mission — Sunday Bulletins, March 2019

Great Lent - 31 March 2019

Priest Musing

A Time to Grow as a Praying Community

Two things are necessary at St John the Compassionate Mission. The first is the life of prayer. The other is the radical welcome of, and life with, “those who are poor and marginalized” (to use Metropolitan Gregory’s expression).

Without liturgy and prayer, the ascetical life among the poor can become idolatrous. Without the ascetical communal life lived among people who are suffering and peripheral, the liturgical life can risk becoming an idol (see Maximos the Confessor on this subject).

Since its foundation, the Mission has always lived these two things together. Daily. We understand that worship is not just on Sundays but every day of the week, and we try to live this not only individually but as the Church at 155 Broadview. This is something the poor have always reminded us throughout our history. Regardless of what we or others might think of ourselves, the word on the street has always been that we are “the Church”.

The separation of the ACROD canonical parish from the life of St John the Compassionate Mission does not change the ascetical and liturgical tradition and practice which has been lived here since the beginning in 1986.

PR

Adoration of the Precious Cross

Troparion in Tone 1

O Lord, save Your people, and bless you inheritance.

Grant victory to all those who battle evil; and with Your Cross, protect us all.

Third Week of Lent - Tone 4

O Martyrs of the Lord, living sacrifices, spiritual burnt offerings, perfect victims sacrificed to God, sheep that know God and are known by him, whose flock no wolf can enter: pray that we be led with you to feed the waters of rest.

Great Lent - 24 March 2019

Priest Musing

...mouths have they that cannot speak...

It so happens that many times we can’t talk back to the voice that speaks no truth. In situations like that even silence becomes hard to bear. As a way of communicating back I mean. You can find yourself listening at the table or hearing around you from mouths that never get tired. A form of idle talk brought to perfection, that we ask God to take away, but which we help perfecting by engaging it, listening or just by giving attention to it. Trying to understand what it says. I’ve seen this week two young people, students, being almost crushed by it because they just listened to and paid attention to the same voice. At the end of the day one was crying, not knowing what happened to her, the other one, being emptied of energy, said in bewilderment: “I was just trying to listen and understand what he was saying.”

It affects us in ways we don’t understand, and I believe we are more vulnerable to this than we admit. The smoke around us, we can inhale and we choke without knowing where to find the fresh air.

We talk back though, by listening the voice of God revealed to us in the prayer of the church. In the gospel, psalms, in the prophets... As father said last night before the vigil talking about the psalms, by listening to them we hear the voice of God praying within our hearts. So, to choose carefully our words when talking back to gossip, means to let His voice speak for us. By trying to bring all our attentiveness to Christ, all the confusion will be scattered - like the smoke that vanishes away. So we can listen, at the end, to the cry of the heart and not the nonsense of the noise.

PN

Second Week of Lent - Tone 1

Keeping a spiritual fast, o brethren, let us speak no lies with our tongue nor give our brother cause for scandal; but through repentance let us make the lamp of our soul burn brightly, and let us cry with tears to Christ: Forgive us our trespasses in your love for mankind.

Friday night - the evening prokeimenon

For his mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord, endures forever.

I waited patiently for the Lord; He inclined to me and heard my cry.

Great Lent - 17 March 2019

Priest Musing

A fragment from sermon on the Sunday of Last Judgement, P. Nicolaie:

We should not speculate outside of what is given to us to see, however if God was not poor, the poor would be condemned, sentenced to a life without value life. A relative one. One that needs to be justified. How many times have we seen and heard that around us? Today it is more present than yesterday. The destitutes, those who fail – the voice that sentences them says: it is because either they chose that themselves, or they were rather predestined, having no choice given the circumstances. We see clearly, in the light of the resurrection, that life becomes everlasting, the poor become mercy for us by carrying within their body the pain that comes from man`s lack of discernment when it comes to embracing life. So, a life without value life becomes holy, because they put on Christ forevermore, revealing to us the face of God. An icon that allows us to behold Christ on the cross, one that is flesh and bones, the one we can see and venerate, because it is not an idol, but as Jesus tells us today, rather Christ himself.

Stories from the Mission

“Fioretti” – on Wednesday March 13!!, revealed in a “fleur du mal”

Not so often, but still as real as when we witness what is beautiful and true, we come across at the Mission to situations that are closer to hell than paradise. We traditionally like to refer to the beautiful witness as “fioretti”. In this context, this would unfortunately be a “fleur du mal”. Not worthy to be mentioned in the end, however, when they are, it is to show the simplicity of truth who cannot be imitated or made up in a copy-paste manner. The simplicity and taste of the “presanctified soup” (as our Angela called it) is fully revealed to us after the Presanctified Liturgy, of course. This week, the soup was served at the Mission dinner as well. Just to receive back, from our old time “customer”, the one who has been bringing mockery and deceit within the room for years, the following comment: it tastes like garbage. She did not stop at that, she threw it on the counter, attacked and slandered one of us, threatening to have another fired. And things did not stop here... The situation in itself reflects a pattern that we lived recently. A community who tries to live something in simplicity, when it comes to faith, prayer, singing and making and eating food, is mocked and ridiculed like the “presanctified soup” (as our Angela called it).

But we all know that when it comes to “presanctified soup” (as our Angela called it), if we do not try to fast and pray, it has no taste. It somehow gets stuck in your throat. But if you do try to fast and pray, just a little bit, something makes you fall in love with it. And it is not necessarily the taste, as good as it might be. If you ever need reassurance for simplicity, just wait for the mockery that comes from self-sufficiency itself. You will be relieved from any doubts.

P.S. I'll never forget my first “presanctified soup” (as our Angela called it) at the Mission. The taste and colour. Never had a better one since then. I found out the secret later. It was a canned bean soup. The one you can buy at the dollar store or get for free from the cage if you pass Angela.

FIRST WEEK OF LENT - Tone 8

While fasting with the body brethren, let us also fast in spirit. Let us loose every bond of iniquity: let us undo the knots of every contract made by violence, let us tear up all unjust agreements: let us give bread to the hungry and welcome to our house the poor who have no roof to cover them, that we may receive great mercy from Christ our God.