



11th Sunday of Luke 14:16-24

***"A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many..."***

***"But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you;..." (Luke 14:14)***

On Friday I exchanged a few words with a person whom I realized I had been avoiding unconsciously because of the threatening way he looked when he visited us. We spent a few moments together and he asked me about the essence of Judaism and Christianity. He wanted to know if I agreed with him or not. He said Judaism was about acquiring the knowledge of God; in Christianity God is love. We shared some reflections on what he had said only to realize that he was shivering from the cold, as he was wearing summer shoes and no socks. We happened to have socks to offer him as well as winter shoes that fit him. Joanna shared with me that he used to be a psychiatrist and he had a family and two children. "Isn't it true? Joanna asked him bluntly." "Yes", he replied, "they took me down because of money..." During the day I thought more about how we could find out in our life that God is love...

Any injustice experienced within this kingdom is washed away within the heart by the love of the poor. This is the blessing we receive when we partake with them in the offering of Christ. What is the value of a genuine act of kindness experienced within our heart? How does this change our heart? How could we pay back something that has no price? If we put a price on it, we sell it. Judas did, and that led to betrayal and death (Friday's gospel - Luke 21:37-38, 22:1-8). We can only learn to partake of it.

To be vulnerable by being poor, lame or blind, excluded and chased from the highways and hedges is not a fairytale. This condition takes away the dignity of being human. You become and are a destitute. Your own sins and the sins of others make a fool of yourself. In the eyes of the world and in your own eyes. This challenges any crumb of faith that clings you to the value of life and to God Himself. We've seen that in people and some of them become addicted to the pain inflicted on them, as a friend was explaining to me this week. Unable to recover, they only look for that pain again, and again, and again. They become casualties and victims in a war that they did not ask to participate in. How is it that in this condition, they come to know Who God is? (They come to the banquet today because they know the One who is hospitable. You would not go to a banquet without knowing the one who offers it). God does not invite the poor and the homeless because they have no place to go, or the sick because they would take any treatment from anybody. He rather invites them because they come freely. He is not using their poverty to buy out His love for them. They do not come because they are excluded from everywhere else, they come to Him as to a friend. They come to the One they know. There is healing and reconciliation, joy and a sense of victory in their coming.

Jesus is asking us to trust Him that this vulnerable condition of the soul enlarges our heart. He tells us that today, through the parable. He tells us that every day at the mission through the poor, lame, blind and the people with a rough appearance who sleep by the DVP. Those who are spared in order to become a living witness for us of this knowledge that they acquired through their vulnerability.

Because they lost the dignity of being human they received in return the knowledge of God. Their kindness to us, every time it happens, is the testimony of this knowledge. Because one could not love while being taught by the world to hate. They bring to us this witness so we can love freely without the experience of being excluded, by always having them partake at the same table.

### **Prayer - the little we have we offer**

The smallest offering brings about the greatest gift when prayer is present. What is broken in us should not stop us giving to God the little good we have. Because the smallest offering brings about the greatest gift.

We see that with prayer. Father said when someone looks at a person praying, the act in itself may look like a total waste of time. You practically do nothing to add and produce value. And yet, when we are in the deepest loss, prayer reveals itself as the only thing that allows us to search the depths of despair for hope. The only thing that finds meaning in a meaningless loss.

What looks on the outside as a waste of time is revealed on the inside as the walk on the waters that try to bring us down into the deep.

So, a small offering of prayer brings about the gift of faith for those who are these days heavily burdened.

\*Please pray for the community In Goma and the children in their care:

Neema; Rosine; Justine; Miriam; Chance; Jemyma; Patricia; Alliance; Nice; Dorcas; Justine; Agnes; Muhindo Dorcas.

\*On Sunday we are going to collect money to help our sister community in Goma to start a bakery. They take care of abandoned girls in order to provide them with a home and to help them acquire skills that will help them have a decent life. They focus on sewing and baking.

Please talk to Fr Nicolaie if you want to help more.

## Longing for a place to pray

This week we received a volunteer who had been referred to us by a different church, with the purpose of integrating him within the life of the mission. When I talked to him, I was surprised to discover that he was looking more for a place to pray. His church, which did all kinds of social programs, closed the prayer services during the pandemic or transferred them online. "It is very hard, you know. To lose the church. To have no place to come for prayer".

He was grateful for the food and happy to work and connect with people but his first interest was for prayer.



At St John's we are taught by our patron saint that the poor are those who evangelize us. We hear credible voices today who say the same thing.

By coming closer to the poor, the church does not need to become a place that designs social programs meant to reintegrate them in society. They've been used

and rejected already many times. By coming closer to them, the church becomes the church. The place where God offers Himself to all equally.

It is true that most of the church communities were more interested these days in getting married among themselves, investing more in the land and buying and selling oxen, thinking about the profit. And so, the idea of doing something for the poor is a new and revolutionary one, since they are mentioned in the gospel anyway.

However, if we love the poor and those who love the gospel do, we discover the church as the place where all of us learn to partake freely in the offering of Christ. The place where we learn to pray for the whole world in order for every soul to come to the knowledge of God and be saved (St Silouan). And who can teach us this prayer if not those who were taught to hate but yet they learn to love?

**Please pray for the sick:**

Mary Mcgee's daughter Sydney; Peter Christine; Stephanie; Iulia; Jason; Sophia; Alexander Charles; Tom; Paul; Phillip Hadler and his wife Juliet; Cristeena; Ann brown's daughter; Pani Eleanor and Fr Michael; Fr John; Fr Michael; Pani Mary; Constanta; Jeni; Florea, Robert; Constantin, Silvia, Claudia Alex; Jincy; Shiron Crisreen; Allain;Levalin and the family;Seena Colin and her husband;; Waheeda and children; Faizah (depression); Shirin and her family; Sana and her husband; Eva; Frank, Cristina; Daniela, Jerry; Delia; Ati ; Ragaie; Victoria;Prayers for Mike.Farida need prayers for her hand to heal ;Prayers for Roselyne and family ; Ana, Cornelia; Prayer for Leon to Jerry; Nikitha, Ocean;Prayer for Gloria, Anne, Marina, Marie, Edemene; Joanna and family GN; Rejoice;Romana, Colin, Michael, Peter, Henry, Joanna, George, Kelly;Tom; Marina;Sandra and her son Chris;Kumari;Susan;child James; Aaron; Sylvia;Fr Jonathan;Tharshini and her two children; Ann Tyron and her family; Sandra Gomaz's children; Sameen; Sophia;Amy;Swetha and children ;Charitha; Jitesh's parents ;Demene;Carol; Gloria; Hawa Bibi; Vimaladevi; Tharsini and her child; Sana's Sister; Ann T.'s husband; Lynn;Michelle;Emanuel(Mani);Stefanie;Geoff;Joey;Evangelia;Sophia;Melanie; Césare;Tanya;Piper;Darius; Zamalk; Nelly; Nahla; Mira; Sandral ;Brenda;Anna Avairo's daughter Vol Gomaz; Levlin's two children Sri' ; Helen; Paul; Wafaa and Sana's sister, Paul , Tihomir

**Please pray for health and salvation:**

Claudio of San Egedio health and salvation

Prayer for Mary Mcgee.She lost her grandmother.

Fr. Michael and Pani Karen; Anthony and the family.He lost his bro in Trinidad.He is hoping to make a visit to Trinidad; Ramanand and his families in Gayana, USA and here in Canada.Ramanand lost three of his family members including one of his brothers ,suddenly within two months. Paola. Elizabeth; Matthi; Dave and his family; Jai's family; Anne Tyran; Joseph to find housing; Lito; Mauro, Prayers for Ted's family (incarcerated son to be free) Dameal asking prayers for his future wife Fathima to be free from addictions Liz Gibicar asking prayers for her mother; Mom waiting for baby Tejasree;Prashastha Maria and Dingo; Crisent; Helen; Greta; Elizabeth; Dean; John; Liz; Crisent; Ann Brown; Elizabeth Sifie; Allen; Leon;Ricky and his family from back home for the hope of reuniting; Aaron, Anastas, Olivia, Gelly, Frank, Eva, George, Rebecca, Andreas, Cathyann, Reigan, Stephanie, Peter, Christine; Christian family from Bangladesh, Sandra, Peter, Angel, Bless, Grace, Swetha family; Atlaw single mom at shelter, Vernevil family; the family of Kenide; Saathiya; Sena; Vinothiny Yvienne; Abdul; Sakanthalathevy; Jumke; Naimi; Anish; Joshua DanielJMaria Lolita Soliman Torres, Jonathan , Richard, Richard, Mary , Elizabeth, Michael, Bill, Robert, Alan, Joanne , Jim , Heather

**Please pray for the deceased:**

Fr John; Alexandru, Constantin; Robert; fr Aurel; Georgi; Rada;Petre; Stela; William; Samuel; Debie; John; Amy, Willie; Dave's wife; Ana; Shirin 's cousin in Jordan; Father Lawrence; Dave; Anne Tyran's father; Edith, Sr. Mary Magdalene, Joice, BettyAnn, James, Pauanasuy Kamthasang, Maria (Covid), Andrei, Agostina ,Carminda, Vimaladevi's sister; Sri's mother, Carol's Mother and 23 year old nephew passed away in Haiti. Demene's mother; Dalalzaki