



## 12th Sunday of Luke 17:12-19

*"...Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"*

*"Do not lie to one another,..". (Col 3:4-11- today's epistle)*

*"Save me, O Lord, for the godly man has failed". (Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 1. Psalm 11.7,1)*

When God asks the question He is looking for an honest answer. Our silence in front of Him is a good starting point, if it helps us to ponder on the answer without lying to ourselves.

The curiosity of God in the gospel today is related to the heart of man.

On Friday, we read in the chapel the gospel of the day about Jesus being tempted in the desert (Lk 4:1-15). Eliana thought that Christ did that to see how far the devil would go. It is the curiosity of God who wants to bring our attention to the root of evil and its limits. Eliana said God wanted to see how far the evil could go and to show that the evil is not the boss. There is a limit, she says. We know there's a limit for evil, and the evil finds it out at "an opportune time", but what does the limit or the depth of our heart look like?

Jesus goes into the desert led by the Holy Spirit after His baptism. Man is brought into the desert to face the reality of his own heart:

***"Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart...". Deut 8:2)***

That's why the desert is threatening, not only because of the evil spirits but rather because what we have within the heart is revealed to God and to us. That's why our deserted modern life is threatening to us today.

Jesus goes into the desert after He heard during his baptism the voice of the Father: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"(see reading at Theophany). He goes into the desert having experienced within the heart the reality of the love of the Father for the Son. He heard his voice and experienced within the heart what was told to him. It is precisely what the devil tempts Him with: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here ". Jesus reveals that this love cannot be tempted because it is unconditioned. It does not require proof because God does not prove but reveals Himself to man.

The ten lepers lived a deserted life. Away from people, avoided by everybody and everything. How could you live a life like that without the proof within the heart that you are the beloved son? We know from our experience of the desert that this is revealed more within the heart when the desert becomes more real. When we are avoided, alienated and forgotten, because of the sins of others or our own sins, because of sickness or sorrow, the love of the Father is revealed unconditionally

to us. Unlike Jesus, we do not go through temptations without falling. We do fail. But this happens so we can experience His forgiveness. There is a limit when it comes to sin and a starting point - forgiveness - when it comes to exploring the depths of the human heart in order to find the love of the son for his Father.

The ten lepers have been through hell having experienced within the heart the love of the beloved Son. We know that because they recognize Christ when He comes their way. It is puzzling for us to see that when their hell is destroyed they forget about being loved by the Father and go their own way, apart from a foreigner who came back to embrace and to touch what he knew within his heart. He put in that embrace all the longing that he experienced while being untouchable. The longing for human contact was answered by embracing God. The faith that makes us all well, when what we experienced within the heart becomes visible, touchable and experienced in relation with one another.

### **Another foreigner getting well**

It is not the first time that a foreigner leper was made well. Eliana reminded us about that on Friday. (The healing of Naaman 2 Kings 5:1-19) We witnessed that ourselves as well the same day.

On Friday, a foreigner brought us news concerning the heart of our city. I say a foreigner not because we don't know him well, because we do. The man had been robbed that day of the boots and the sleeping bag that he had received from us two days before. I say a foreigner because he confessed to me in the chapel later on that he did not read the bible at all. The news of the resurrection was foreign to him.

The news about the heart of the city is related to the famous hotels where homeless people were housed during the pandemic. The reality of those places is a physical, watchable, touching hell. As someone else said on Friday as well "There are no atheists in foxholes" (experience of the first world war). Hell is so real that you cannot fall into the illusion that God is not present.

This man had been sheltered in one of those places, being one of the few who managed to "escape" from them. "They house you well, they give you food three times a day. You have a big TV and drugs, you just have to ask for them by opening the door. They even offer you a vaccine, every week, in exchange for cigarettes and coffee cards. Everything you need. But what really happens inside is hell. 150 people died of overdose there. I did not believe him when he said that. I asked him to repeat it several times and still could not accept it. Not even now. He tried to convince me. Every other day, an ambulance would come to the hotel. "Sometimes it is not even an overdose, who really knows who did the needle."

A good comparison to help us understand that hell, we agreed, was the story of Hansel and Gretel that were welcomed in a gingerbread house and fed sweets just to find out that they were going to be eaten alive later. The difference here is that many do not have the strength to escape. In the chapel, later on, we looked at the icon of the resurrection. He did not know that God went to hell to free people from there. He wanted to see the proof even though he himself was brought out from there. Maybe he was looking for proof that he would not be the only one saved.. On Friday we found out the heart of the city is caroused and full of addictions that make the hell grow, where death is not negotiable. We also found out that there is real hope and a way out from a sinful heart. Why do we say the heart when we think of where the homeless were being housed? It is because we believe that the way a society cares for its own poor reveals the limits of compassion that we have for one another. Making death look comfortable is not a way out of hell, but it rather makes you question and wander at your own comfort. How comfortable do you sleep in your own bed and how well do you eat the food that we can afford to buy these days? We must not get too comfortable in our own addictions, so that we may not be surprised at the outcome. The heart of the city needs forgiveness, in order not to condemn people to death because it does not believe in its own repentance.

#### **Prayer request from Mary at Good Neighbours in Scarborough:**

*I have noticed many families coming to our food bank are sick with covid. Please pray for them.*

*Also please pray for homeless people that they will find a permanent place to stay. There are few people coming to GN regularly who might be homeless. With new covid lockdowns it is hard for them.*

\*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.

Please pray for the sick:

Tihomir; Kate; Payton Clark (back surgery); Kim; Sana, and her family in Egypt. Sana's father passed away in Egypt; Isaiah; Pani Alexandra; 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; 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

Please pray for health and salvation: Rejoice; Claudio of Sant'Egidio for health and salvation; George, Connie, Nick, Fennie, Theodore, Chris, Nick, Toula, Steven, Nicole, Tony, Sam, Sophia.; Prayer for Mary Mcgee. She lost her grandmother.; Fr. Michael and Pani Karen; Anthony and the family. He lost his brother 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 Daniel; Maria Lolita Soliman Torres, Jonathan, Richard, Richard, Mary, Elizabeth, Michael, Bill, Robert, Alan, Joanne

Please pray for the deceased: Rejoice mother

Pani Eleanor; Fr John; Alexandru, Constantiu; 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