



Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee:

Luke 18:10-14

"for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Triodion Begins Today

On Wednesday,

L. had tears in her eyes when we were answering the question before dinner. It had nothing to do with the question, but it was rather about something that had been triggered in her. Later on, as we were eating together, she shared her thoughts and her emotions. She said that the following time we should ask people a different question: "When was the last time you felt humiliated?" "That's a good question right?" Then she explained why she had thought about that. She had recently broken her arm. She had already had a support worker before and different social workers assigned to her case, but now she had to accept not only support for her mental health but for her body as well. To be washed by another person, a stranger, in a situation of extreme vulnerability, and feeling ashamed of herself, brought into her soul the experience of humiliation. "You know how girls are sometimes ashamed of their body?" Being ashamed of who you are, you are forced to receive the care of a stranger. This humiliates you. "The body though," says L., "brings humility to the soul." "You know, Jesus changes the humiliation in humility. God does that." She sounded relieved saying that. Somehow the memory of her humiliation changed into something else.

As I was talking to L. the icon of Agia Koinonia we have in the room became more clear. The icon does not only show strength from the young one but also humility from the elder. How much more humility would the elder need today since the youth does not have much experience with caring and his legs are shaking because of bad knees? This is a shameful reality of our life today when it comes to assisted suicide. Many opt for it because they are alone, many opt for it because they do not want to become a burden. To force communion on them would mean to humiliate both generations.

Prokeimenon. - Psalm 32.22,1
Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.
Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

“Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived.” (today's epistle)

On Friday,

the reflections around the table on today's gospel were more about being humbled. What does it really mean? How does it happen? How do we get there? Where else would we be? The tax collector and the Pharisee pray to God from two different places in their life. High, or pretty high for the Pharisee, and low if not one of the lowest for the tax collector. The tax collector was despised and hated with real hate by all because of the money but he would have also been considered impure (entering and collecting the money from everybody, he would have touched what was considered impure, according to the law). Hated because of the money - that's a powerful demon which demands a heavy price - and, secondly, being contaminated daily, he would have met all the requirements in order to be expelled and alienated from the community. And so he was. One might say that a tax collector would have sold his soul for money.

How much conscience would he need in order to feel ashamed of himself in this situation? The voice of the Pharisee that despises him is the voice of the people that he hears and encounters everyday. It is also his own voice that he cannot silence anymore. He does not look for a place to hide in the temple but for a place that shelters his shame. He tried to hide but couldn't find where. He could not find such a place even within his heart. When he faces God, through his prayer, God changes his humiliation to humility. And so he is justified.

What is that to me?

On Friday we realized that there is not much humility in our time. The discussions we had revealed to us that the humble person is the one who listens to the other (C.) and that at times this is undertaken by different people within the community, who change their roles. To serve brings humility into one's soul, to be served could do the same to you if you didn't feel entitled. However, seeing so much hate and dispute tells us that there is not much humility in us (E). People keep looking for hierarchy, when in fact there is none, we are all the same in God's eyes (M).

The one who is humble in the first place in the story today is God Himself, because He listens to both the tax collector and the Pharisee. He teaches His humility to the tax collector, changing his humiliation and his shame. We are collectively, as a community, about to enter Tridodium today. We are to remember collectively what was humiliating in our history and to come in prayer to Him into the temple. To listen to each other, to make sure that every single voice is heard. Every voice is understood and prayed upon, even when the voice is accusing. Unlike the one of the Pharisee who spoke within himself, today they speak in public.

However, this is a way in which we heal and partake in the mystery of Christ, who through his body and blood brings humility and life to our souls.

“There is no true humility without humiliation” (pope Francis)

At the beginning of the Tridodium the scripture teaches us that the starting point for walking with Christ is a lowly place. We think more about fasting and restrictions, at best maybe trying not to avoid the strangers in our lives. The places in our heart that touch us with shame and humiliation experienced and lived are to be searched with prayer during lent. They are the low place we start from. Through them God works humility in our soul, as L. said. As He changes the nature of things by bringing us into communion with Him, He would change the deepest wounds of our heart so we can enter in communion with each other.

He does so in order for the humble to listen with humility to the voice that nobody hears. The humility of one person is enough to bring about communion among the brethren and sisters who thus learn to listen to each other.

Humility is the healed wound of humiliation without easing the pain of it though. A humble spirit can still be humiliated by the rejection of the other who does not want to enter in communion. The community can only live this rejection with hope..



The icon of community



A photo of an indigenous man carrying his father on his back to take a Covid-19 vaccine in the Brazilian Amazon has gone viral, and became a symbol of the complicated vaccination logistics in one of the world's most remote areas.

In modern and wealthy societies, people often choose assisted suicide either because they are alone and abandoned or because they are ashamed of becoming a burden for the children.

How much more humility the elder would need today since the youth has not much experience of caring and his legs are shaking because of bad knees?

For those who are sick

Mikayla and her brother Luca; Karunawathi, Gloria, Vijekumari, Ronda, and Regina; Delia; Valerie; Tom; Traian; Peter; Marco; Kim (knee surgery); Tihomir; Kate; Payton Clark (back surgery); Sana, and her family in Egypt. Isaiah; Mary; Sydney; Peter Christine; Stephanie; Iulia; Jason; Sophia; Alexander; Charles; Tom; Paul; Phillip Hadler and his wife Juliet; Cristeena; Ann brown's daughter; Silvia, Jincy; Shiron Crisreen; Allain; Levalin and the family; Seena Colin and her husband; Waheeda and children; Faizah; Shirin and her family; Eva; Frank, Cristina; Daniela, Jerry; Delia ; Ragaie; Victoria; Mike.Farida; Roselyne and family ; Ana, Cornelia; Leon to Jerry; Nikitha, Ocean; Gloria, Anne, Marina, Marie, Edemene; Joanna and family GN; Rejoice; Romana, Coline, Michael, Peter, Henry, 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; 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

Please pray for health and salvation:

Community In Goma and the children in their care: Neema; Rosine; Justine; Miriam; Chance; Jemya; Patricia; Alliance; Nice; Dorcas; Justine; Agnes; Muhindo Dorcas. 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; Tejasree and her mother; 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

Please pray for the deceased:

Elena; Pani Mary; Rejoice`s mother ;Edmund; Pani Eleanor; 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.