



Sunday of the Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32

“...and no one gave him anything.”

One thing that we see at the mission is people coming and going, returning and leaving again. We see people who look for connection with others, like all of us, who are in need to remember the love of the Father.

We see so many different situations. We welcome everyone, from young people or volunteers who return after a few months or a few years (they did the artwork for this week's bulletin) to people who we fear may not be alive in one week's time. For some of them, to leave means to depart before being reconciled in this life with the first love or with the lack of it.

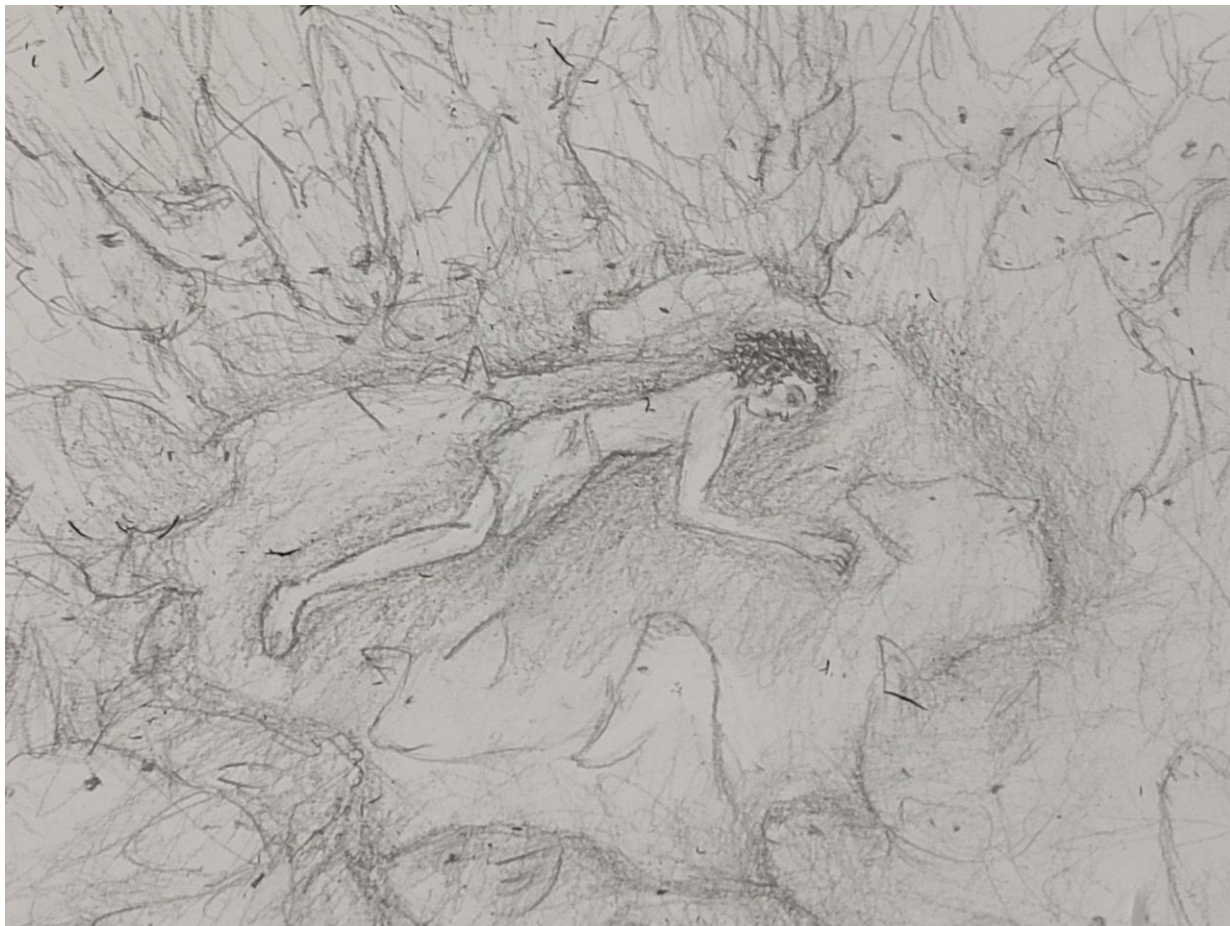
While being at the mission, we might struggle at times, like the older brother in today's parable did: failing to rejoice and believe in reconciliation, struggling at the same time with the same love within the heart. The younger brother wasted the first love, while the older brother had a hard time partaking in it. A love that becomes a burden that cannot be sustained brings no joy for him.

However, this struggle is not the same for all. If some struggle with the love they know, others are crushed by the lack of it. The failure to love, to share in the righteousness of God, has effects on those who experience the lack of it. The resistance of the older brother to his father's love, who gives everything to him, alienates the younger one, the one who experiences the rejection of all.

We see many times at the mission people like the prodigal son who are literally ostracized by the community. They might or might not have wasted their inheritance (who knows how much love they experienced from an early age anyway) but they end up on the street vulnerable to violence abuse and drugs, vulnerable to death because “no one gave them anything”. The scene is so dark that even if they would like to return tomorrow, where would they go? Is there a place that would rejoice at their returning? Is there a human heart that would receive with forgiveness the repentance of the son?

And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" (Lk 18:8)

I remember days at the mission when we tried to connect with people like that who don't want or cannot remember who they are. At times we were able to exchange our names, other times we had to call the police because we became too familiar with each other.



Their alienation is touching your older soul wondering where is his God? : *"My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, where is your God?" (Ps 43:3)?* How could a man who receives nothing remember the love of the Father? We see what "nothing" looks like. We see from the outside the effects of it. We know that the love of the Father changes the human soul but at times we wonder if any crumbs of human love would have brought, within the prodigal son, the same desire for reconciliation. Nowadays we hear more about prodigal sons and daughters who lie down by the rivers

of Babylon not able to continue their journey. A captivity that leaves you with despair. An oppressive captivity that makes you wonder if they should remember. The memory of what we lost can be more crushing than captivity itself; if there is no hope, we better not remember.

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion.

*How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?... If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!”* (Ps 137 - we start singing today at orthros)

Within the tradition of the church we know that forgetting God is one of the giants that crushes human life. My forgetfulness of Him brings alienation to another human heart. Failing to remember Him during the day does not let others sleep at night, as the vigil at night sees the threat of the noon day. Collectively, atheism is the expression of this amnesia that makes us fools believing today that there is no God (Ps 14:1). It is through this atheism that today human life is losing dignity and value. By leaving God behind, parents see their children abandoned.

I don’t know how the soul who experiences the “nothingness” of this world, the profound rejection, who is surrounded by the accusing voices, is touched and brought to his senses by the silence of God. I don’t know how the painful experience of Babylon’s captivity brings about the memory of God within the community who makes this the cornerstone of their suffering, the cornerstone of redemption.



Among the many things that the parable brings us today, it is also speaking about the reality of reconciliation, that comes from within the broken sorrowful heart of the father, who suffered much and the memory of God within the young heart that receives nothing. . We are all longing to return to our senses. To remember the love that we

know. The one that we cannot live without. However, the parable today does not speak about complete reconciliation, but leaves us in the end with the voice of the Father who is pleading to the older heart. We are left to hope and pray that the coming back to life of our brother will bring joy and peace in our heart too. However, the love of the Father the one that is wasted by the younger Son and resisted by the older, the love that seems not to be enough for the human heart, is rekindled in the soul of the one that receives nothing, who experiences nothing, who felt at times that his life meant nothing for him or for others, who is ridiculed by the pigs.

When we do come across a situation in our own life or within the life of the community, in which our lack of faith is looking for the presence of God and cannot find it, the parable today tells us actually that this is the place where God acts first. Both the repentance of the love that is wasted and the challenge of the heart that is resistant starts within the reality of the human heart that "receives nothing". That's where God acts first.

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.