



Sunday of the Holy Cross
The Gospel According to Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.” Matthew 24:42

At the end of the Vigil for Peace on the first Friday in Lent,

I stepped out of the dark Mission. A few souls had kept watch in the dark with David’s psalms, as countless others have done before us and still do throughout the world.

At the Mission and, I suspect, in Toronto, we were the only handful of people keeping vigil until midnight on a Friday night. I stepped out of the dark and silent Mission feeling that I was alone. I was expecting to find a dark and empty street.

To my surprise, Broadview Avenue greeted me with honking cars, groups of loud young people walking and laughing. Couples walking arm-in-arm, others in tight embrace waiting for the bus. The city was alive and vibrant. The war in Ukraine seemed very far from everybody’s mind.

Glad to see that laughter had returned to our streets, I pondered that perhaps this time it is not their turn to weep and repent. In a way this war is different, and it is necessary that we as Orthodox be the ones in the dark praying for forgiveness and peace. It is our turn to weep and repent. All wars for sure are fratricide. In that way, this one is no different. What makes this war different? It is ours, ours to own.

Many voices have taken the world stage since the killing started in Ukraine this time around. One of them, in Ukraine, is Metropolitan Onuphrius, a true good shepherd, who advises his people to read the Gospel during Lent; it is hard to tell if any other speaker, judging from their words, has ever done this.

In this time of the crucifixion of simple people in Ukraine, the crucifixion of mothers with children and young men sent out to kill with lots of holy water (orthodox and heterodox) on their heads, a prophetic voice has been heard.

At the time of Jesus’ crucifixion, too, a prophetic word was given. It came not from the Lord but from Caiaphas, the high priest of the time, who said: “It is more expedient for one man to die than for the nation to perish”. Without intending it, Caiaphas was revealing the demonic logic of the violence used against Christ. Today also we have a similar prophetic voice from one of our high priests, that stirred the world and should stir the churches. “We have entered into a struggle that

has not a physical, but a metaphysical significance. It's a battle between good and evil." I believe these words are, like Caiaphas', prophetic words, to show what this crucifixion is about.

I propose that this word be received by the churches as truly prophetic. They should be addressed not to the world but to the church itself. If we are to pray for peace, we need also to receive these words and take them to heart to lead us to the way of repentance. Before calling the world to repentance and trying to remove the speck in the other eye, we should start with the beam in ours. I am aware that this was not the original intent of these words, but I am sure also Caiaphas did not mean what the gospel writers understood. This war is a judgment on the church's failure to be what it is. The church is the heart of the world, and we should repent for waging war.

What is the battle between good and evil really about? In his book, Vasilij Grossman has a monk (a fool for Christ) say: "the history of men is not a struggle between good that seeks to overcome evil, no, it's the struggle of evil that tries to destroy the little of humanity that continues to live. For if what is human is not destroyed then evil will not win." In this war, no one will win anything except the arms dealers. To fail to repent as orthodox Christians for having betrayed the Gospel and caused so much death and suffering will be a sin of immense magnitude, adding sin to sin. To repent means, for us orthodox Christians, to hear the unknowingly prophetic words of our brother Kyrill of Moscow and to "enter into a struggle that has not a physical, but a metaphysical significance. It's a battle between good and evil."

This struggle is a struggle for the very renewal of the church, a struggle for the very soul of the church, for the sake of the life and salvation of the world. The Orthodox church is the fullness of the truth because it incarnates the very life of God in the world.

At this point the only one who needs to repent is me, us, so that I, we, can return into the church. Most of all, we Orthodox have sinned and failed the Church.

Our failure as Orthodox to live the Gospel, in so many countless ways, has been brought to fruition in this war that has scandalized the world. Our failure has caused suffering, death and scandal. No one else can repent for our sins but us.

We need to enter into this metaphysical struggle and face the evil that is in us. Let us pray for all that is good and peace for the world, in spite of our orthodox sins.

Perhaps God will have mercy on us and forgive us? By us, I mean first of all myself. That is why I need to go to the Friday prayer vigil and dare to pray for peace.

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It happened during the week:

- Please pray for Br Luke and Sister Penka. On Sunday (of the cross) they are renewing their commitment as a brother and sister of mercy. Their presence within the community reflects to us the mercy of God for every human being. They have been an inspiration for the young and old. We pray others will join them in the coming year so they do not feel alone.
- George was named Executive administrator this week. This does not reflect all the work George has been doing for the community as an Almoner. We pray that George's work will not go unnoticed but be repaid in mercy ten times more. That he will taste the fruits of his labour.



- The ambulance came twice at the mission on Friday morning, during breakfast. Apparently, everything was all right, Shawn said.

Friday was one of those days, Joanna said. We know what it means. With different trouble knocking at the door.

- We cannot be thankful enough for the families who make food home and bring it to us. More and more people in the neighborhood and or from farther away bring cooked food to us. That has become extremely helpful for us.

- We host working guests at the house for short periods of time. We are preparing for a young guest next week. Please talk to Fr Nicolaie if interested to stay, sleep, eat, pray, learn and work at the mission. We take new "students". And all this for free. For the short term, of course.

- Do not forget the vigil on Friday night and the time for confession. There is a path for the forgiveness of sins.

- Johan started to work in the morning at the mission, at breakfast. Since he came everybody feels at ease inside. Both brothers and sisters who come to rest or come to work or pray. We thank him for all the good work.

- Please pray for our catechumens: Bradley, Zachary, Madison and Valerie.
- On Saturdays we give special attention to young people who want to get accustomed to mission work. Their hours count for their community involvement for high school, if you did not know that. Please make referrals to sister Penka.
- We have news From Goma. They started a classroom for training. See picture on the left. Please let Fr Nicolaie know if you want to help.

"If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

...Whoever loses his life..."

On Tuesday Cinthya came to the mission. She comes every now and then. Most of the time asking about Joanna. I remembered, around 10 years ago, when she was helping Joanna to run the breakfast program at the mission. She was there every day. Cinthya had different health problems. When she returned on Friday I heard she had been taken to the hospital because of a heart attack (we found out later that it was not the heart this time). It happened before at the mission: "Fr Roberto saved me at the time. He convinced me to go to the hospital because he saw something was wrong with me. I went to find out I had a heart attack. If I did not go, who knows what would have happened. Now I take a full hand of medications every day." However, On Tuesday after breakfast she did not speak about herself but about the pictures of the people we have on the wall. Our mission "hall of fame", as Nick called it in the past, hoping that he would make it there one day. Cinthya was visibly happy to see the faces of people she knew. "I know maybe 80% of them. Some lived in my building. She died of an overdose, I could not stand her. We were our worst enemies. Someday I thought I said to her I wished she died. I always felt guilty when it happened. I thought maybe because I said that to her it did happen. She had a very bad life, but you know what, when she was sober, very rarely, she was a nice person. I guess she had good and bad moments like all of us. And Mike, I remember when he came into the building. After he tried to kill himself ending up in a wheelchair. How he ran into a couple, the worst in the building, that hooked him up on drugs to take his pain medication. He died of an overdose. Poor Mike, he was such a nice guy. And him, he was killed down the street by the mission, at Broadview and Queen, by a street car when he was riding a bike. He was rushing to buy drugs. Oh, and him, he was nasty. Very nasty, with everybody. He was a racist with all. I was in the building when they shot him. I heard the shot. You know, I can tell you a story about most of them. I asked Cinthya to talk to Br Luke because he is working on gathering information about people we have on the wall. People "who passed from death to life", we pray with hope as we approach Pascha.

Cinthya spoke about others as well, with a similar end of life. People from our community. Listening to her, today, on the day of the cross, when radical love is manifested to us, I was thinking who really knew and loved these people with lives so broken and disfigured. Who really cared about them in this neighborhood and city. How much value they had in their life. If nobody did, Cinthya did. You could see that on her face when she was talking about them.

Cinthya continued, "today there is an overdose every 24 hours in my building. The ambulance comes every 24 hours. Some they manage to save, others they don't."

It is true, that morning in the chapel we heard the ambulance siren maybe every 5 minutes. It has been like that since the beginning of lent. On Forgiveness Sunday, I had to pull over the car several times because of the ambulance, both going to and leaving from the mission. I realised at the time this had never happened before.

What we see and terrifies us today is the result of an evil that has been growing for a long time, east and west. There are more lives crushed and dying now because this evil has devalued life, when life does not fit the ideological pattern. If the people stop resembling the ideological idol, they become dispensable, through addictions, assisted suicide and so on, in the west or sent to kill or die in the east. If human life is not loved without ideological conditions it becomes disposable when it does not meet the criteria. It becomes a nobody or an enemy worthy of dying. We should say that this evil passes by from people to people and nations to nations. When we do not see the innocents dying on our streets we see enemies worthy of dying overseas. Who is the enemy if not my "familiar friend" (Psalms)? Am I worthy of dying because of my sins? The evil always argues with itself, making you take a side, in order to surrender. Smoke and mirrors so the bleeding heart cannot be seen. It makes the nations argue and fight concerning the purity of the system, while agreeing with each other when it comes to the death of the person they do not value.

Christ on the cross, naked, ridiculed, abandoned and mocked, embraces the "lowest value of human life" possible in this life. He was born in simplicity and poverty in a cave and He is crucified with an image of a life worth nothing for the ideology demon that dictates today. He is mocked on the cross because people feel entitled to mock the one whose life means nothing for them, the one who is powerless, naked and abandoned even by his friends, and even by God (gospel after Mark). They are ashamed of how low Jesus was able to bring the quality of life through the cross. They are ashamed and angered. "This is not what a human being should look like!" It is what He chose for us to be. By undertaking this diminished value of human life through the cross He gives dignity back to all human beings who were "denied" a dignified life on the earth. Those who were denied their life by others are becoming disciples of the cross. Every year we see something personal through the cross. I remember a few years ago we saw Christ as a friend. When we feel that abandonment in our life we see the cross as a friend we can relate to. Today we hear Christ talking to the Father. We hear his prayer asking for our forgiveness. We hear the voice of the innocents we fail to listen to. The voice we silence through our indifference. The voices who pray when they speak. It is what God gives us to see this year and to listen to so we will not go mad like Judas when we realise what we have done, but repent like Peter who breaks down his shame with his tears. Because the innocents we heard are those we loved the most without knowing.

"Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Those who are denied because they were disfigured by the sins in which we all share are seen within the church transfigured within the kingdom of God. The light of the transfiguration is for the church to value and see any human being through it. It is said that the martyrs really have this experience during martyrdom, to behold the Transfiguration of human life. To see within the kingdom of heaven their life that is taken away by the oppressor and the life of the oppressor who persecutes them. As in the case of St Stephen, the heavens open for them for a little while.

The church is the place where the innocents find life and protection and the abusers pray for forgiveness with hope. The ones who condemn have no personal experience of the light on the mountain. We pray that they will, eventually. So their hearts may be filled with love for those they now condemn.

March 28 – April 3

Tuesday	8:30 am	Morning Prayer	Wednesday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 4:00 pm 6:30 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Vespers/Dinner Great Compline/Canon – 9:30pm
Thursday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Jesus Prayer	Friday	7:00 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm 6:30pm	Orthros Noon Hours Jesus Prayer Presanctified Liturgy followed by Silent Meal & vigil for peace in Ukraine
Saturday	9:00 am	Morning Prayer	Sunday	6:00 am 7:00 am 8:30 am	Jesus Prayer Orthros Divine Liturgy



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We are an apostolate of the ecumenical patriarchate "Mother Church of Christ's poor"
under the Omophorion of Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

St. Silouan Chapel, March 27, 2022

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Happy feast of the gospel.



Annunciation :

Drink deeply of the JOY.

Prayer request:

For those who are sick:

Alex;Hawa Bibi's sister Fathima; Frank; Chris; Evlokia; 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; Jemyma; 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:

Akhir - died this week in Scarborough (killed)

Dillon; 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.