

Luke 8:5-15

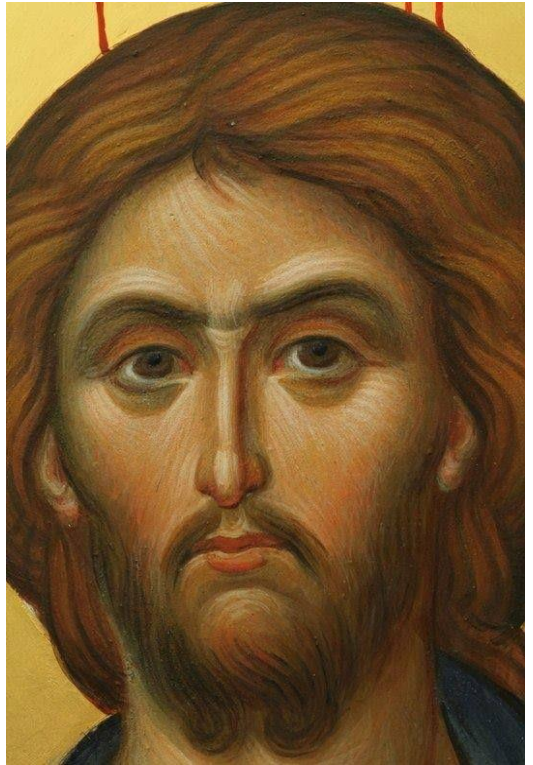
*“The seed is the Word of God.”*

***“To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. ...”***

Today we are not spoken to in parables anymore. At school, children are not even told stories. They are taught how not to listen, because there is nothing worth listening to except your own voice. It is a consequence of a generation that went away from God. Not only from God, but also from the normality and simplicity of living. Today we don't know how to sow and how to harvest, our food and our work are plastified. Recently, plastic particles have been found even in the mother's milk from which babies are fed. Our lifestyle and superficiality are like an empty tomb, where there is not much that God can relate with in order to tell us a story. It is this fake and empty form that shapes our lifestyle that made S. angry unto the depths of his being. S. is an educated man, he completed a Master's degree in Mathematics in England. His thinking is sparkling. He ended up on the streets somehow because he cannot compromise with the system. He tried hard many times, he says, to change things. But the system does not want to. In every job he ever had he was eventually asked to cheat in a certain way. He was recently discharged from a hospital where he ended up after somebody hit him in the head and broke his skull. He shows me his scar. He changed indeed, physically. Just before this incident he was spending some of his days with us at the mission praying in the chapel without being a christian. However, S. was not troubled by the incident. He can smile at times about seeing death because somehow his heart kept its purity, among all this surrounding anger. He is right, we end up living in a way that makes no sense, how then could God tell us a story when we lost our minds? As for S., we pray that his justified anger would be consoled within the purity of his own heart and not take over everything.

***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.” (John 1:1)***

That's why today He speaks plainly with us. After years of Christianity and witness of the church we know that the Word took flesh and became man. That's what we celebrate today when we remember the fathers who have seen the face of Christ. A face who does not hide anymore.



We know today that the love that is touching our heart has bones and flesh. It is a love that is approaching us in vulnerability, a life that is oppressed by death. We see it every day at the mission in the broken humanity of those who come through our doors, we see it in the face of the poor and the oppressed, in the face of those who are condemned to die of addictions in their apartments or on the streets, in the faces of those who are euthanized without knowing the excruciating pain that comes with that, in the face of the innocents who are not heard and they are refused life, in the face of the parents whose suffering is marketed. We see it on the faces of the young people who are taught to hate and then go to die fighting an enemy that they do not know. We see it on the face of our children who are lost within this world that has forgotten and neglects its conscience.

On Friday, on the stairs of the mission, we were wondering how it is possible that evil could steal the Word from our hearts if the Word became flesh and entered our hearts in the first place. How much evil have we opened up to, if the Beloved is carried away from the heart of the world? From the heart of the world who is the church (Olivier Clement).

We have no moisture within the heart because we forget to cry when we see the pain around us. Today the pain is not hidden, it is walking on the streets in its nakedness. We are though choked by our own worries and our own pleasures that cannot take us a long way.

Our heart has become hard, that's why today we see with our eyes and we hear with our ears but we cannot understand because our senses are strangers to the heart.



***Isaiah 6: 9-11 "You shall hear indeed, but not understand; and you shall see indeed, but not perceive. For the heart of this people has become insensitive ...***

***How long, O Lord? ...***

***Until the cities are laid waste without inhabitants, and the land shall be left desolate.***

We see and feel this insensibility of the human heart who receives the broken body of Christ with no tears and no understanding. We see the seed wasted within a heart that refuses to nurture. We see inside of us and we feel the desolation of the place. At times at the mission, people are coming in abundance and yet we cannot attend to them and welcome them because there are only a few people within the church and because of the coldness of our hearts with which we struggle. In Scarborough, we cannot accept more families who need help because of lack of food and people with a heart to help.

We are given the poor, but we lay them to waste because the heart of the world is worried about other things, and the poor are stolen away from us. We are left with nothing to love. We are left with the worries and riches we chose, that rapidly become a reason for quarrel and war because

the spoil cannot be divided but won over.

So then, how long would the poor be refused the heart of the world to enter in?

***“And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold.”***



On Friday, as we were reading the gospel outside on the steps, just as the young volunteer was reading the part about the birds of the air, here comes a bird that flies over him at that very moment. It lands close to Murray's feet and looks for seeds on the porch. We all saw it and we were joyfully sharing the moment. It made us reflect at that time about how evil can steal the Word from our heart. The bird looked so small and the young volunteer reading the gospel was so attentive to what he read. The impression of the moment was that it could not be stolen from him. The young man has just finished his degree in political science

and he was contemplating a career in law. One could see him easily having success with that. He changed his heart after he talked with people from the system who confessed to him that you cannot really keep your innocence there because the law has flaws. You have to defend and let the crooked person walk away or to condemn the innocents or impose great penalties for small mistakes. The system gives you that chance and if you are a good professional you cannot miss it. The pay is very good indeed... He took one year to think and reflect on the next step. He does that by volunteering at the mission, he reflects on his future within the sorrow and the suffering of the poor. He sees them and hears their voices. He is attentive and asks questions, and he is not insensitive. That's why the scripture started to interest him now. He was not the only young person on Friday who fit this description, at least a couple more worked within the room with sister Penka during the day and prayed in the chapel.

One thing we forget is that the renewal of the heart happens at times within the most rich and oppressive systems. Systems that were economically and politically dominant at the time, and seemed untouchable. So it was with the Israelites, who came out of the Egyptian oppression, as they had also returned from the Babylonian one. The gospel flourished during Roman persecutions; As much as I can remember, the church really flourished after the “fall” of communism in Romania (there is a longer discussion here; communism did not really fall but it was reoriented and the church was flooded with young people, but we are still waiting for the good results of that now).

This happens because any powerful system draws its health from oppressing others. In communism they demonstrated that they can also oppress while economically collapsing. The young generation coming up now is the oppressed one. It looks at times like a condemnation. They experienced from an early age the nonsense of sin and the consequences of greed. The riches that made their parents worry too much, forgetting about sharing the joy with their children.

The heart of the young generation was touched and harmed. It is precisely why they are looking for healing and Truth because the lie has harmed their conscience. They don't look for compromise or for an easy sell. They don't look for comfort or for a career. But for the reality of the gospel, they want to bring back the Beloved within the heart of the world. To bear one hundredfold more fruits than those who were wasted. The suffering of the children has a cost, it comes with the reality of a heart prepared to love because it suffered much.

### **Community life:**

- On Sunday, Anthony is receiving a blessing to become a postulant for the brother of mercy. He will make a commitment for a period of one year to see what it takes to give your life to the church and to see how that can multiply the goodness of the community. At the mission you can find Anthony playing the piano early in the morning, doing dishes in the bakery, helping around, doing readings on Tuesdays and helping Br Luke on Fridays in Scarborough. Pray for him and for his desire to live in a church that finds itself at the margins with the marginalized.
- Last week, Ko revealed to me why our economic model makes no sense. He described to me a situation in Chinatown, where this place for the poor people was offering them tea and soup and the possibility of being together for \$5 a person. With 5\$ you could have tea and eat soup and watch some tv and talk to people. They would not make much money. It was a business designed for poor people. They had to close down because of the inflation. Every month they had to increase the price by one dollar until the price reached 10\$. They had no choice, Ko said, they had to increase, because the prices were going up. "I buy now with 80\$ what I was buying with 50\$ yesterday. I have to buy less". Nobody was able to pay the 10\$ so they had to close down. One might think this has nothing to do with the great economy in Canada overall. It might, just because it created an impossible economic reality. Where there is no offer because the cost cannot be justified. We don't see it now but it might be just a matter of time until it gets to all of us. At least that's what Ko thinks. However, even if it will not affect us, because we are too rich, the poor already suffer more. They are in an impossible situation now. In Scarborough more families come for the food that the city does not want to give. In Toronto more hungry people come every day while finances go down.
- Peter, one of the three brothers we know and we love, was sick during the week and he ended up in the hospital. Scarborough and Toronto were both alarmed. He can hardly walk and we don't know why. The doctors at the hospital thought he was just fine. We hope that they were right and did not discharge him because of his poor condition. If you see him, take time to talk to him and comfort him. He really likes that. We hope that this is the cause of his struggle.
- The feast of our patron saint is fast approaching. We will celebrate St. John the Compassionate on November 12, at 6:00 pm. Bring a friend with you when you come this

year. There will be prayer, food and other surprises that we are going to announce as we go forward.

- Memory eternal to Peter Siskos. Peter died on Monday evening. His son Alexander came to the liturgy last week on Sunday. Peter was a close friend of the mission which he supported during his life. Before dying, he remembered Roberto and the work done at the mission.

**Mission church collections of Sunday : Oct 9 2022 Donations \$125, candle box \$66.9, wine/candles \$20**



**Prayer list for the sick and those who have recovered:**

Peter; Jose, George, Mihaela, Richard; Bernadette, Elisha; Kayla; Harley, Maria and Carlos; Omar; Elisabeth; Ben, Kim, Maria Becatam ;Seena; Tony, Nikitha; Dianne; Joy; Susie; Alex; Maurice; Lynn; Molly; Thomas; Varghese; Delia; Leela; Mary; Tanya; Basma; Aditi; Larry; Darius; Lori; Lisa; Cindy; Césare; Fatima; Debbie; Donald; Hermina; Raúl; EK Thomas; Nebu; Evangelia; Sarah; Shelley; Bill; Ruth, Kristian and Frank; Maria; Binja ; Mike; Luke; Anusia; Lavalin's son; Sana; Father George Patrick, and Father Michael Miklos/Pani Karen Miklos; Dominique and her daughter; Mike; Luke; Arjuna; Joy; Susie; Alex; Lynn; Molly'; Thomas; Alex; Fathima; Frank; Chris; Evlokia; Mikayla and Luca; Karunawathi, Gloria, Vijekumari, Ronda, and Regina; Delia; Valerie; Tom; Traian; Peter; Marco; Kim; Tihomir; Kate; Payton Clark; Sana, and her family in Egypt; Isaiah; Mary; Sydney; Peter; Christine; Stephanie; Iulia; Jason; Sophia; Alexander; Charles; Tom; Paul; Phillip and his wife Juliet; Cristeena; Ann brown's daughter; Silvia; Jincy; Shiron Crisreen; Allain; Seena and her husband; Waheeda and children; Faizah; Shirin and her family; Cristina; Daniela, Jerry; Delia ; Ragaie; Victoria; Mike; Farida; Roselyne and family ; Ana; Cornelia; Leon; Jerry; Ocean; Gloria; Anne; Marina; Marie; Edemene; Joanna and family; Rejoice; Romana, Coline, Michael, Peter, Henry, George, Kelly; Tom; Marina; 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; Fr. John and Pani Marie; Lynn; Michelle; Emanuel(Mani); Stefanie; Geoff; Joey; Evangelia; Sophia; Melanie; Tanya; Piper; Darius; Zamalk; Nelly; Nahla; Mira; Sandral; Brenda; Vol; Gomaz; ; Helen; Paul; Wafaa. Fr David; Pani Donna

Please pray for the deceased: Peter; Fr Tony; Zatia; Tom; Fred; Shrin; Andre; Andree; Akhir; Arjuna; Dillon; Elena; Pani Mary; Rejoice`s mother; Edmund; Pani Eleanor; Fr John; Alexandru; Constantin; Robert; Fr Aurel; Georgi; Rada; Petre; Stela; William; Samuel; Debbie; 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; Andrei; Agostina; Carminda; Vimaladevi's sister; Sri's mother; Carol's Mother and 23 year old nephew; Demene`s mother, Dalalzaki.

**October 17 - 23**

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|-----------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------|---|--|
| <b>Tuesday</b>  | 8:30 am<br>7:30pm              | Morning Prayer<br>Psalms Study –<br>via Zoom | <b>Wednesday</b> | 8:30 am<br>12:30 pm<br>4:00 pm<br>6:30 pm | Morning Prayer<br>Noon Hours<br>Vespers/Dinner<br>Bridges/Compline 8pm |
| <b>Thursday</b> | 8:30 am<br>12:30 pm<br>2:00 pm | Morning Prayer<br>Noon Hours<br>Jesus Prayer | <b>Friday</b>    | 7:00 am<br>12:30 pm<br>2:00 pm            | Orthros<br>Noon Hours<br>Jesus Prayer                                  |
| <b>Saturday</b> | 8:00 am                        | Divine Liturgy<br>☒ <b>Soul Saturday</b>     | <b>Sunday</b>    | 6:00 am<br>7:00 am<br>8:30 am             | Jesus Prayer<br>Orthros<br>Divine Liturgy                              |

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|  | <p><b>St Silouan Chapel at St John`s Mission</b><br/>           155 Broadview Ave. Toronto, ON M4M 2E9<br/>           T: 416-466-1357 E: info@stjohnsmmission.org W: stjohnsmmission.org</p> <p><b>St Zoticos Orthodox Church at Good Neighbours Mission</b><br/>           193 Markham Rd Scarborough, ON M1J 3C3<br/>           T: 647-358-4105</p> <p>We are an apostolate of the ecumenical patriarchate "Mother Church of Christ`s poor" under<br/>           the Omophorion of Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa</p> |  |
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St. Silouan Chapel, October 16, 2022

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