

"You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

We hear people say that today our culture has become a culture of death. This was first spoken out many years ago and year after year the death culture has been growing, taking over our lives, paralyzing with fear, where there is no fear, the core of our being, making at the same time many innocent victims. As we go on ignoring the poor, thousands of people die by the road today, here in Toronto or overseas, in different ways but because of the same cause. On our feast day, Prof. Berkman was going to speak about the roots of this death that our common existence has embraced.

But just because the demon was named, it did not stop growing. Knowing the devil did not help us to come out victorious. Today, it does not hide because it feels generously victorious.

We see in the gospel that Jesus conditioned our life by doing something. By loving what we know we should love. "Go and do likewise". Death is a consequence of us not doing the Word of God. Our half dead neighbour reflects the indifference of most of us when we come across our neighbour; the half that is alive reflects the love of the stranger that manifests upon the one who is stripped down. In a culture of death that is growing today we are still half alive because of the love that still manifests upon us from the people we do not know, most of the time. People who want to remain hidden when they love and embrace the one who cannot stand up by himself. How do we participate in this life giving reality to the soul and not be shut down by the fear of being paralyzed in flesh and bones and spirit?

The stranger among the thieves



On Friday, after listening to today's gospel, we asked people whom they identify with. Nick replied laughing that he identified with the man that eats a lot of sweets. Raymond did not want to miss the occasion and he said that he identifies with the man that takes it easy. The question was a serious one, the answer told us that the poor, the sick and the oppressed who rekindle in us the love for life and truth have a sense of humor. The journey with them is not a dry one. The yoke is light and so are the words.

A. wanted not to miss the question and he told us directly that he is the half dead man lying by the road being ignored by the priests and other people with authority. He gave us examples of how he experienced this reality, fighting within himself to keep alive, being ignored by the priest he called during the pandemic. Nobody had time for him, everybody was busy. He was visibly and emotionally marked by that. Eventually somebody helped him buy a ticket and he made it to Toronto. Now he feels, we concluded, like being within the inn. However, the ignorance with which he lived his battle with life harmed his soul more. One could see it now.

José said that initially he did not find an answer, but then he realised where he is in the story. He said he was in that spot that frustrates you and brings about disinterest in the soul because

November 14 - 20

Tuesday NATIVITY FAST BEGINS	8:30 am 7:30pm	Morning Prayer Psalms Study – via Zoom	Wednesday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 4:00 pm 6:30 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Vespers/Dinner Bridges/Rev Andrew J Summerson
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	Orthros Noon Hours Jesus Prayer
Saturday	9:00 am	Morning Prayer	Sunday The Entry of the Theotokos into Temple	6:00 am 7:00 am 8:30 am 6:00 pm	Jesus Prayer Orthros Divine Liturgy Vespers

	<p>St Silouan Chapel at St John's Mission 155 Broadview Ave. Toronto, ON M4M 2E9 T: 416-466-1357 E: info@stjohnsmmission.org W: stjohnsmmission.org</p> <p>St Zoticos Orthodox Church at Good Neighbours Mission 193 Markham Rd Scarborough, ON M1J 3C3 T: 647-358-4105</p> <p>We are an apostolate of the ecumenical patriarchate "Mother Church of Christ's poor" under the Omophorion of Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa</p>	
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St. Silouan Chapel, November 13, 2022

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Prayer list for the sick and those who have recovered:

Henri; Anthony, Peter; José, Father Robert; Pani Peggy; Pani Joan; Fr Dan; 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; Cristina; 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; Zamalk; Nelly; Nahla; Mira; Sandra; Brenda; Vol; Gomaz; ; Helen; Paul; Wafaa; Fr David; Pani Donna

Please pray for the deceased:

Judie; Joel; 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.

one tries to do something but then either the need is too big or the problem of the neighbour is too complex to resolve. Another volunteer picked up the phrase and continued. You see so many people in need in Toronto, in the downtown core, that you don't know whom you should help and for how long. In time you just get used to the view and become desensitised. Because you think there is nothing that can be done to solve the issue. And today you have the issue of addiction, which makes everything else such a complex and difficult puzzle to solve.

I shared with the people what I heard the same morning from an old brother of the community who has been homeless, on and off, for long parts of his life. Now, he's been on the streets for a couple of years. He told me how on Thanksgiving day he was so overwhelmed by this indifference that he broke off, in a park, he was just crying. All the people who passed by pretended he was not there. They saw that he was in visible distress and yet, not one person stopped to recognize his presence. He thought for himself, if I was dead here, probably they would have reacted the same, being indifferent. If they are indifferent when I am alive they would be the same when I am dead. However, as he confessed , at night this indifference becomes nosy. You can never sleep and find peace, there are people walking around all the time, you feel like being hunted.

The Samaritan is the good stranger.

To become a good stranger for your brother is to stop ignoring the person in need. He lives in a reality that is disturbing for our soul but not more disturbing than what we have inside of us. Christina shared with us on Friday how she changed her attitude when coming across people who were panhandling. When she started to notice him and communicate with him, something inside changed and the fear went away.

The good stranger is the one who allows the distress of the other to enter into his or her heart. We see the person in need all the time, the gospel tells us today, we see because either we turned our head away not to look the person in the eyes or we go on the other part of the streets. God brings this person our way, He engages us through him. God makes the first contact. Anthony had a funny story from a man who was panhandling at an intersection in Toronto, where a lady who was driving a car stopped several feet back in order to avoid the person. She was in the car and he was on the street, but this was not enough, the fear in her heart transferred to her car as well, as if she feared being contaminated or who knows what else.

We are strangers for each other, we become good when we fight the fear of the other with the commandment of the Lord. We become ourselves vulnerable and we stop ignoring the human suffering we see close to us. We open the heart to that and God brings us to a large place. We see a crack in our fear and we trust the light that breaks our darkness. Because we read the story several times we think that the Samaritan is a professional in doing good. It might be so, maybe that is who he was. We've seen people in our community who do this good to strangers for a living, but the truth is that they are not born with it.

From our community we learned that people who are touched by the suffering of the one lying half dead by the street are those who lived this experience in their life, being abandoned and forgotten, being nullified by the indifference of those who should have helped. God allows somehow this indifference to enter into the one who is in need, maybe, at the present time, to generate energy and love for later.

I remember a confession of someone from our community who had to put up with this indifference of the professionals. That indifference remained in the soul and became a hope that one day, the heart who was ignored would be able to love the suffering of a person. This hope became prayer and the prayer makes the presence of God kind to the soul who is still neglected.

And it is not only for the heart to start this way but also for the body. Maybe the good stranger would have had no strength or had never touched a person in need, maybe the wine and oil were his family's last resources and now they would become hungry. Like the story with Elijah and the widow, or like many stories we hear every day about people who live on social assistance and they portion their income in order to donate at the mission, or leave us money, as it happened one morning this week when br Luke received a consistent amount from somebody who had been eating breakfast with us for a long time.

The Gospel gives us the path where life comes to us in abundance. We enter through the door that opens ahead of us as poor and as vulnerable as it gets. Nobody has been a saint before and some of us will never be. However, this door opens to all of us, we enter by choosing not to ignore the suffering stranger that we can see. Little by little we learn to be attentive and to be present, which today are the oil and the wine that heal the ignored life in those who are dying. The inn is the church, who always has the doors open, in order for the sick and the good strangers to eat and celebrate together, because that is what heals the community in the end. Today, to see and to enter into the reality of human suffering is not an option anymore, it is a cry for help, like the sirens we hear every few minutes going through the city these days. If we do not enter we are perishing from within us. We feel that the world is collapsing with us and we shrink and become smaller and smaller. More insignificant for life. We are called to open our heart to the one we see dying, and this today is not a metaphor anymore. We would not know what to do because of lack of experience, but this opening teaches us to pray and the Holy Spirit would guide our steps and the angels working together with us.

The feast of the community.

The most happy feast for the poor is when they can touch and embrace the one who loves them. Otherwise they make a feast every day by loving us all.

The holy relics of St John the Compassionate have arrived to us. He is at home, because he never abandoned us, he is at home because he is always among the poor. We feel so much the presence of St John the Compassionate within the community. It is his way to understand the gospel, his creativity in welcoming the poor and the rich and his practicality to generate wealth out of poverty and beauty out of simplicity.

But beyond all, he is at home now because those he loved the most are now able to venerate and to kiss his body. The genuine love of the poor cannot be resisted even for the greatest saints, because the poor are imitating Christ himself, who became poor in order for us to become rich.

There is genuine joy today because there is genuine love between St John the Compassionate and the poor. Many things are said about our patron saint and we need to keep repeating them so we receive guidance in everything we try to do. One thing that is not said many times is that he genuinely loved the poor. He loved them not because he had to, not because he tried to fulfill the gospel. The gospel was fulfilled within his life, because he genuinely loved those who do not look or try to look perfect. Most of the time all of us try to come closer to those in need because we know that here is bestowed upon us the kingdom of heaven. St John genuinely loved the poor and the oppressed. We see this from the way he related with them, we see that from the way he was waiting for them at the entrance of the church with the gospel. We see that through the people who come daily to the mission. It is his presence, his presence and his love for every human soul that makes them welcome and at home here.

We are never poor at the mission because we see this faithfulness between our patron saint and the poor. A genuine love that is shared, a love that gives.