



## 11th Sunday of Luke 14:16-24

*“When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”*

During the week I talked to one of the people who have been coming often to the mission recently. When he came on Friday in the chapel he caught the end of the gospel reflection and he added to our reflection his own knowledge about God. He said that now he has no doubts that God is real because many times this was proven to him. “I saw many miracles, I don’t need more.” The miracles he talks about are the acts of kindness he experienced in his life. This is the place where he acquired his knowledge. The reality of being touched with care by another human being. A couple of days before he had told me about a friendship he developed in Cuba with an older poor man with whom he played chess for hours. His family would go fishing and they would eat what they caught, the old man would share his own fish with him even though he did not have enough. This was one of the many stories that did not leave his heart indifferent. That’s why, he said, when he comes to the mission he does not come only for the food, but to cleanse his soul. He reached an age in his life where peace is essential. That’s where he finds it. He comes also for the food, not so much for the nourishment in itself but for eating with other people. “I have food and eat by myself in my home but this becomes repetitive and it gives you no joy at the end. When I come here and eat together, even with people I don’t know, something fundamentally changes in me. There is peace and joy that comes with that.” Our friend had a family and children and he always worked hard to provide for them. As a man, he said that was his own responsibility. But somehow, during that time, he did not find any time for solitude with God. No inner peace, which in time broke him down. “You know, when I ended up on the streets, that’s where I met the most interesting people. People with all kinds of problems but there was something about their humanity, something genuine, fresh and creative, within all that pain that surrounded them. I don’t know, for me somehow it was always easier to relate with poor people even though I lived a middle class life for a long time. It looked to me at the time that those relationships were more on the surface based on some mutual needs. On the streets, the Truth in

relationships prevails even though it is not easy to take it. There is also time, I can spend hours with a person who is panhandling on the streets. It fills my time and my life. I don't know. That's just me."



Today we commemorate Christ's forefathers according to the flesh, both those that came before the Law, and those that lived after the giving of the Law.

**Special commemoration is made of the Patriarch Abraham**, to whom the promise was first given, when God said to him, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18)

The parable that we heard today is about hospitality. The church commemorates today the one who was hospitable to God: Abraham, through whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed. (Gen 22:18). When we read the story about Abraham's hospitality we are struck by the quickness with which he welcomes God, pleading

Him to rest and wash His feet and to quench His thirst and offering food in exchange for His hunger. How did he see that God is hungry, He is thirsty and that He needs to have his feet washed? (This scene about washing reminded me about Thursday's discussion between sister Penka and Margaret, where sister Penka offered to wash Margaret's hair). How can he see that, since most of the time we see in God our own needs and our own vulnerability in need of comfort? It is precisely because Abraham loved Him. It is the love for the other that makes us notice the need in others and take us out of our own matrix. Those who love God are those who see the brokenness in others and attend it disregarding their own abilities or lack of them. You offer what you have. Within our own poverty we find enough goodness to share with the one we love. Unlike the friends of the Master in the parable today, Abraham loved God; that's why he attended immediately to Him. If the friends from the parable had loved Him, a good answer would have been,

“Master if you say so, I would bring my wife with me, because I want her to know your love as well”; or, another would have said “Master, I bought two oxen, I’ll exchange them for two young calves and offer them as food for the feast”; as for the landowner, he would have said “Bless my land Master so next year I can bring fruits to the banquets and please forgive me now for coming with no fruit to offer like the poor that precede me”.

Because he loves God, Abraham desires to spend time with Him, and to share a meal together. He did not rush the supper or the encounter with the Lord, his patience reminds us about J’s love for the poor, who can spend hours with them in the streets.

***“Like the poor man who eats in secret”*** (from the psalms)

There is something else in the hospitality of Abraham that we look at today. Eating together is healing, a rabbi said, but he underlined that especially in the hasidic tradition everything is about eating together. Everything happens around the table. Even the reflection on the scripture is preceded by meals. That’s why J finds peace while eating with the strangers at the mission because he partakes in the healing of the community by sharing the meal together. The Master’s invitation is one to reconciliation, healing and more than anything, to love. His invitation is the manifestation of His love that is rejected by His friends. After the fall, we lived with the consequences of sin and with our rejection towards God’s invitation to reconciliation. The cross reveals this rejection in all its aspects and touches on all its consequences. It does not only hurt God on the cross, but our rejection affects our relationships and the community at large. Because of this betrayal, because those who reject the Beloved are his friends, any genuine act of hospitality is painful to undertake because it hurts many times when it is genuinely manifested. The one who is hospitable has to experience all this betrayal because it is a part of our rejection of God in a fallen world. At times the rejection could be radical and painful; other times it could touch on smaller aspects, as Jesus said, when we live with the expectation of being paid back. The manifestation of evil makes us resist opening our own heart. We look for security, comfort in relationships and the certitude of being accepted, where in reality this never happens.

But it is through this hospitality around the table that love can manifest itself and heal the community. Abraham would have experienced this betrayal and this rejection but he continued to open up to goodness until he met God Himself. He resembles God who takes our betrayal to the heart without giving up on the shared meal. It is God who finds Himself eating alone, in secret, like the poor man, when He finds His banquet hall empty. The loneliness and the poverty of the solitude make up the community of the saints where God and the poor share the meal together.

*“ ... a hedge separates the wild from the cultivated land and wards off the attacks of wild*

*beasts, those who live there can distinguish between good and evil ... "*  
St Ambrose

Why did the poor and the lame and those who live on the hedges come to the banquet? They know loneliness and they live at the margins of life and death because their vulnerable condition places them there. They are alone in that because that's not the place where one could find comfort but rather the reality of sorrow that is longing for the kingdom of God. They are the first who are longing for communion; through their longing the encounter happens. There is genuine love for the Master in their hearts and that makes the banquet possible. If we don't want to experience the betrayal of a friend we need to become the friends of those who are attending the banquet today and share in the abandonment that the world has given unto them. Because they are longing for God where being rejected by men makes the healing possible because they accept the invitation and the gift, thus becoming the gift for us all.

### **Apolytikion of 11th Sun. of Luke** **Second Tone**

*You justified the forefathers in faith, and through them betrothed yourself, aforesaid, to the Church taken from out of the Gentiles. The saints boast in glory. For from their seed, there exists a noble crop, who is she who without seed has given You birth. By their intercessions, O Christ our God, save our souls.*

Today we celebrate those who practiced hospitality in the multitudes of our many sins from the beginning of time. In a world that rejects God, there are saints who dare to love Him with generosity, sharing from the little they have. It is through them that we are invited to partake within the goodness of the banquet. We know that this is a foreign "concept" in a modern world that does not see anything good in the past and destroys with appetite, in order to invent plenty of superficiality out of nothing. It is true that the older generation is not perfect and its lack of perfection hurts the younger one. It has always been the same, as the sin entered the world through one man so does the human love, is passed from the poor to those who encounter the. It is through the witness of the saints that we learn how to love when wounded by the rejection of Truth that has been manifested within the land for a long time. Today we see and we witness that the fathers knew the goodness of God. They teach us how to welcome the stranger when we experience the rejection of a friend, how to cure our fear in the presence of the one who is on the path of pain and how to approach the one at the hedges who is rough because he's seen much and lived much. It is by approaching the poor that we learn to love without the fear of being rejected and to share our poverty of spirit without the desire to receive something in return.

On hospitality:

.....he who gives must do so with reverence for the one who receives; otherwise, he wounds the receiver's self-respect. He must not give with indifference; neither must he play the part of one who condescends; neither must he desire to show his power by the gift. A danger for all in social service is the desire to feel their power, for the person in need is, as such, weaker than the one who helps, and when he thanks for the assistance, he admits his weakness thereby.

All this makes gratitude difficult. If the one who helps lets the other feel his superiority, then gratitude dies and in its place we find humiliation and resentment. How many persons who receive would like to throw the gift into the giver's face..... (R. Guardini)

Hospitality of Abraham (Genesis 18: 1 - 8):

And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I fetch a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds, and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

- **On Wednesday, December 14 at 6:00 pm**, St Nicholas comes back to the mission. Bring children so he can make them happy. There will be a mission Nativity play and plenty of food. Come and sing carols with us. The donkey is coming as well..

Mission church collections of 1 Sunday : Dec 4: Donations : \$965, candle box \$55.6  
The mysterion of confession part III

A regular and frequent confession is healthy for our souls, especially when we struggle with a general sense of guilt.

Frequent confession can help us grow towards a spiritual maturity.

There is a difference between the feeling of guilt and the sense that one is a

sinner.

To have a sense of one's self sinfulness requires a humble acceptance of who one is and an unshakable confidence in the Love of God.

Guilt on the other hand is what we experience in front of our sin when we are alone with the devil.

The devil accuses us of our sin, and we feel guilty. To remain there is to remain in a spiritual infantile state and never free from "the spell of our sins" as St John Chrysostom speaks of.

Today in secular society for example, there are a multitude of voices accusing every one of something, producing in all those who listen to this narrative a sense of paralysis and collective doom.

On the other hand, when in freedom we enter the mysterion of Confession , and name our sins ,Christ rather than accusing us , constrains us to move beyond the "spell of the sin "that we confess . Christ constrain us towards humility , trust in His love and learning to live one's life as a gift . Christ's presence in the mysterion of Confession personally constrains us towards a love that is radical , by learning to surrender all of our energies and essence to it. This is what it means to repent.

The priest confessor is there to help us move from what we confess to a spiritual maturity that is characterized by the humility that is able to really surrender our life as gift of love .

This path of true repentance is personal and we need another to walk with us, personally.

**THIS FRIDAY NIGHT FROM 6 TO 9 PM FATHER WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR CONFESSIONS....AVAIL YOURSELF OF THIS GRACE!**

Prayer list for the sick and those who have recovered:



br Luke; Joanna; Coleen; Kelly; Gaia; Linda; Leon; Trixie; Nick; Peter; José, George, Mihaela; Bernadette, Elisha; Kayla; Harley, Maria and Carlos; Omar; Elisabeth; Ben, Kim; George; Maria Becatam ;Seena; Ocean ,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; 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; Lynn; Molly'; Thomas; Alex; Fathima; Frank; Chris; Karunawathi, Gloria, Vijekumari, Delia; Valerie; Traian; Peter; Marco; Kim; Tihomir; Kate; Payton Clark; Sana, and her family;

Isaiah; Mary; Sydney; Peter; Christine; Stephanie; Iulia; Jason; Sophia;er; Charles; Paul; Phillip and his wife Juliet; Cristeena; Waheeda and children; Shirin and her family; Cristina; Daniela, Jerry; Delia ; Ragaie; Victoria; Mike; Farida; Roselyne and family ; Ana; Cornelia; Leon; Jerry; 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; Lynn; Michelle; Emanuel(Mani); Stefanie; Geoff; Joey; Sophia; Melanie; Tanya; Piper; Darius; Zamalek; Nelly; Nahla; Mira; Sandral; Brenda; Vol; Gomaz; ; Helen; Paul; Wafaa.

Please pray for the deceased: Roy; Jake; Richard; 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.

## December 12 - 18

<b>Tuesday</b>	8:30 am 7:30pm	Morning Prayer Psalms Study – via Zoom	<b>Wednesday</b>	8:30 am 12:30 pm 4:00 pm 6:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Vespers/Dinner St Nicholas Arrives!
<b>Thursday</b>	8:30 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Jesus Prayer	<b>Friday</b>	7:00 am 12:30 pm 6pm to 9pm	Orthros Noon Hours Moleben for St Philips fast, Confessions & reading of the psalter
<b>Saturday</b>	9:00 am	Morning Prayer	<b>Sunday</b>	6:00 am 7:00 am 8:30 am	Jesus Prayer Orthros Divine Liturgy

	<p><b>St Silouan Chapel at St John's Mission</b>            155 Broadview Ave. Toronto, ON M4M 2E9            T: 416-466-1357 E: info@stjohnsmmission.org W: stjohnsmmission.org</p> <p><b>St Zoticos Orthodox Church at Good Neighbours Mission</b>            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, December 11, 2022

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