

2nd Sunday of Luke

love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return;

“For behold, the sinners have bent their bow, they have prepared arrows for the quiver, to shoot down in a moonless night the upright of heart”

Ps 11

A depiction of this verse of the psalm at the mission would sound like that: “You know how a sniper can see his victim from 1.5 km away, on a pitch-dark night, and take him down?” “When the enemy lights a cigarette. That is enough to be seen. Just a little light can break the darkness.” This would pause anyone who would think to light anything at night.



It is true, the light shines in darkness and the darkness cannot comprehend it. However, within the darkness there is the enemy who wants to kill the light. To make it darker.

The imagery at the mission, as the image of the psalm, reminds us of another saying that we heard at the mission of how a priest becomes a target for the enemy. For the real one. Because he is sent by Christ within the world. But so it is with every human heart who desires to do good and pursue it. However, it is not only the enemy that hurts the human heart. We do the same to each other. Another saying talks about the need for a sacrificial lamb in any community, so that its members may shoot at his legs, never in the heart, because nobody wants to take his place.

There is a difference though between these examples. When our weaknesses and sins affect those around us in the community, this does not make us enemies to each other, but it rather teaches us to forgive and accept forgiveness. The lack of the knowledge of God can do much harm. However, that’s not the enemy Jesus tells us to love today. The enemy, as we see in the psalms and in the imaginary depictions that circulate within the mission, is the one who has a plan and is set to take down the light. Intentionally. And there is something to be gained from that.

Today, we are not concerned with personal enemies, because we don’t do so much good to be a threat to others, but we are rather concerned with Christ’s bride: the church. The community, as we know it. The community of people who wants to do good because it has been given the knowledge of who God is in order not to spread hate but practice the acts of mercy.

The revelation of the gospel today, as Br. Luke said on Friday, is that God has enemies. Because He teaches His church to do the same as He does, to love them. So, if we want to follow Him, we, as a community, will have the same enemies as “we try to do good and pursue it”. When Jesus speaks of enemies and the need to love them, He does not speak about things that happened in the past, where our wounds, physical or psychological, have maybe not yet been healed. He speaks about a movement that happens now because love can act only in the present. As the church is living the gospel there is a real enemy that wants to take down the life within. This is the enemy that needs the love of the innocent, the one that is about to harm now the bride of Christ. He does not stop, and he knows what he is doing. This is the enemy whom Christ asks us to love. The one whose plot is real and a real threat to life.

"Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (today's reading - St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1)

God is generous with us and brings us to a broad place. He opens to us the door that was suppressing our being. The innocent had no response for the sniper until now.

Because He is hospitable, God opens the door of compassion and hospitality to all, including to His enemies in order for them to become "His friends". Christ is the door, through His forgiveness we can all regain our innocence. We can all listen to Him now. His forgiveness gave us this right.

If there is a source to our sins, it lies in the intentionality of doing evil deeds. That's where the love goes first, that's where He attacks. That's where He sends His disciples as sheep among wolves.

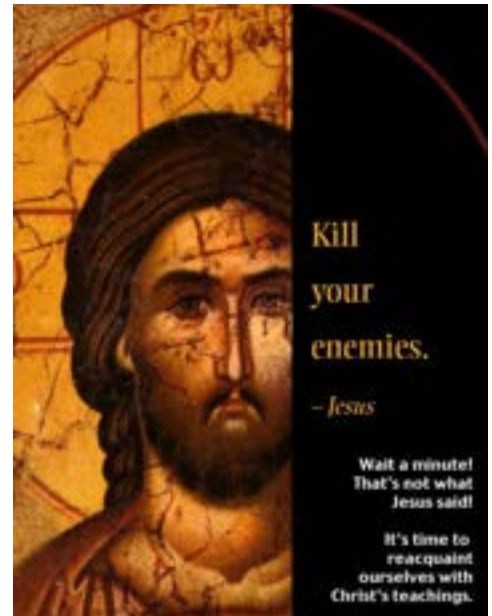
This has been the revelation of Truth as we know it. This is the truth for which the blood of the martyrs has washed many lands and sanctified many waters. Because they were faithful to the love for the enemy that Christ entrusted them with.

Today, the enemy is the one who mystifies the truth. The one who divides mankind into those who deserve to be loved and those who don't. If this verse from the gospel is forgotten, all of us will become enemies to each other and, together, enemies to God. He will be again left alone against many. The love would be the same, but the bride of Christ would be wounded, and the covenant broken.

What is scarier for us is to see the same thing in the newspapers, the apology of death for the enemies and from people who come regularly to the mission. This lie has taken over and seduced the minds and hearts of many. There is anger and hate that comes with that. There is no forgiveness proclaimed and no hope for reconciliation. But only the desire to harm the one that is weak and without defense. Listening this week to a confession like that gives us a firsthand understanding of a generalized lie that is not afraid to hide anymore.

If we do stop listening to Christ telling us to love our enemies and disregard the truth of our own redemption, the harm done to each other out of ignorance will increase.

The prayer of the Son from the cross will still be heard: "please forgive them Father because they do not know what they do", but the one who would love us in silence will be only God.



We already see the many faces of a love concerned only with its own. It develops into a love that justifies the killing of those who are very close to you because it is exclusive. And at the end it excludes even yourself because it is "faithful" to its very nature. We see that in the case of euthanasia, abortion, harm reduction and so on.

Without trying to love our enemy, we'll have no love left for our own.

Mission church collections of 1 Sunday: Sept 24 2023, Church Donations 262\$, candle box 34.4\$

Community sharing

A story written by Elisha of how we end up desiring death for those we love. If we had loved our enemy, we could wonder if that would have happened.

I was quite ill a couple of weeks ago and ended up in the hospital.

My roommate was an 88-year-old man who could no longer walk-but the physio team was working with him to get him up and walking again. He was able to take a few steps with a walker and support to go sit in the chair by his bed. He was very happy when he was finally able to do this.

His wife was also 88, I believe, and this man called her his "angel".

She was very loud and demanding and domineering. It was impossible not to overhear her.

Deacon Pawel was kind enough to bring me holy communion and after he left I overheard the woman say, "I don't believe in heaven or hell-when you're gone that's it."

One day she came bursting in and said to her husband that she had just dropped something off for the doctor.

"What?"

She didn't say anything, but then the doctor came in and said, "Oh so this is a DNR..."

I overheard her talking about the \$2 million dollars they would get if they sold the house. The man's son came to visit him and was really trying to be encouraging of his father, saying how great it was that he had been up and walking, and with help could be well enough to go home. And the man kept saying: "I want to go home! I want to go home!"

One day his wife again burst into the room saying, "Ok, I just left some papers at the desk for the doctor."

"What papers?"

His wife did not answer him, but soon afterward the doctor came in, and said to the man: "I received your application for "MAID". Do you understand what this means?"

"Yes! Take me to the crematorium! Take me to the crematorium!"

The doctor said, "Well, I am having trouble understanding because you keep telling us all how much you want to go home."

Nathan said: "I have had ENOUGH!"

And his wife said: "We've been talking about this since we were 80."

The doctor said: "Well, I really have no experience with this, but usually this is done for people with terminal illnesses. You would have to undergo psychological testing, you would have to speak to our psychiatrist, and then we could arrange for you to talk to 'the MAID people'..."

I had such a sick feeling overhearing all this.

Nathan just glowed the day he could make it over to the chair. He had children. Probably grandchildren. He was born in England, had lived in Africa for many years which probably gave him so many stories to tell. He had a wonderful sense of humor. So, in my eyes, and I am certain in the eyes of his son, he was still full of Life. His wife really seemed in such a sick rush for him to die. He called her his angel. He would obviously do anything for her. Anything.

I talked to Fr.Nicolaie about this and he told me there doesn't even need to be any psychological testing, and that people are being killed for all sorts of reasons - physical pain, emotional pain. One bad day??

Nathan could live to be 101 years old - he could enjoy his home, and his memories.

I don't know quite how his wife blinded him so. I don't think this was truly his wish. I really don't.

I believe it to be solely that woman's influence over him.

She kept reminding him of the things he *couldn't* do, rather than be his cheerleader as his son was. When his son was there hope filled the room, and I don't think his son had any inkling about what his father's wife was up to. After all this though, the shuddering feeling of death filled the room as Nathan slept. But he would wake up and have his breakfast. He would say to anybody who could hear him that he wanted to go home. He would only say, "Take me to the crematorium!" when his "angel" was there.

I said goodbye to Nathan the day I was discharged from hospital. I wanted to say something to him which would make him change his mind, but I had never been so close to this tragedy, and was at a loss, being so in shock at what is happening in our country.

I can only pray for Nathan and his wife now. I pray he is up and walking and at home where he truly in his heart seemed to want to be. Praying for his wife is a little harder I must admit, but she too needs our prayers. We are not living in a civil society. We are teaching our youth that life can be thrown away when things get difficult, our children are growing up feeling alienated from the value of life.

I myself am facing trials right now. Should I too sign my life away?

It should not be so easy. It is terrifying how easy it has become.

Nathan, you have a heart, and you have a soul, your soul shines through your eyes when you smile and laugh. You see? He could still laugh. Laughter takes Life. And Life is not for us to decide to take away. Writing this, I have that sick feeling again. How many are we losing to "The MAID people."? We are losing the unborn and now we are losing the grandfathers.

Pray for Nathan. Pray for his "angel" Margaret. Pray for every single individual in our country who wishes to have their life snuffed out by people who seem overly eager to do this for them. Right now, in our country there is a real evil to fight. I saw it up close. Margaret, Margaret, don't you know if you do this you will never again get to hear him call you his "angel"?

As Christians we have a responsibility not to stay silent about physician assisted murder.

So where is *my* voice??

I am too weak to fight this on my own. But together as a community who love one another as God loves us, we share one voice. We must not hide our light under a bushel. I will always wonder what happened to Nathan. And here comes that sick feeling - but I pray somehow, something lit a fire under him, and he found *his* voice... And that he stopped trying to die in order to please his "angel".

Elisha

October 2 - 8

Tuesday			Wednesday	4:00 pm	Vespers
Thursday			Friday	7:00 am	Orthros
Saturday			Sunday	7:00 am 8:30 am	Orthros Typica



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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, October 1, 2023

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