



## 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke

*"Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher anymore."*

*"I have cried to You, O Lord, from the depth of my soul with fervor.  
Let Your divine ears be attentive to me.  
Everyone who has their hope in the Lord is higher than anything that could  
sadden them."(antiphon)*

S. has been coming for some time for breakfast at the mission. He made a ritual, like many others, to take his breakfast outside and talk to Johan on the stairs, around 6 or 7:00 am. A small community has formed around Johan in the morning. People probably feel safe around him, as he talks respectfully and firmly, while serving them. S. started to come inside during the last two weeks. I knew S. was from Ukraine. He shared that information one morning, but I assumed he had been in Canada for some time. Maybe because he always smiles when he comes in at the mission, or maybe because of the way he speaks English. His discrete and light spirit somehow did not seem to belong to a recent refugee who has plenty of worries. That was not the case, as we found out this week. He has arrived relatively recently. He left Ukraine around one year ago. "So you were there when the war started?" "Yes, I was." "From what region?" "From Mariupol ..."

That news brought a pause to our discussion. "Yes, the things I saw ..."

S. continued to speak about that region. About how his family is still there and how they try now to put things together to make a roof for themselves, surrounded by ruins. About how the Russian population was always predominant there even though the region was always part of Ukraine. He described a painful reality with "apatheia". Without taking sides. Without blaming anybody. Without hope that something good will come out from men. He spoke about the reality of war so differently than any others because he has seen its face... "You are a refugee now?" "No", he said smiling. "Refugees now sleep on the streets in Toronto. There is no help if I become a refugee. I applied for a work permit. I'll try to get any type of work I can find. And beside this, as a refugee, I could not leave the country for at least 3 years. If I leave, I could not come back. And I want to come back. It is much better with a work permit." "How is Toronto for you?" "So different than Europe. Here is like heaven. I am serious. People talk to you and they are kind. You don't feel you are a stranger."

***"You who hate Zion, be shamed by the Lord; for you will be withered like grass in the fire." (antiphon)***

On Friday, we were visited by an elderly person. Even though he spoke English with difficulty, he was able to make himself understood quite well. He came from the other side of the war, from Moscow. He wants to volunteer, to do anything, just to be close to people and talk to them. From the way he talked and related with us one could understand that he had a long career in working and helping people. There was a sense that his past deserved respect, even though we knew nothing about it. The simple

encounter imposed that respect. He did not want to leave Moscow. He had to leave everything behind because he sensed that the war was coming closer and closer to him. Not that it will come to Moscow, but rather he will have to go to the front line, because of the profession he had.

At the beginning he thought war was supported by only a few people. Not anymore, in time the majority in favour of the war became overwhelming. "You can hardly find one person desiring peace". What about the church? "They push for war too. Everybody." The church issue for him is not so personal as it is for us. It does not bother him much because he is a Muslim.

***"From the Holy Spirit the streams of grace well forth; they water all creation, so that life be engendered."***

There are not many voices that speak and desire peace here either. Or if they exist, we don't hear them well. What we hear terrifies us. Like this week on Wednesday. One voice summarized almost the general belief: "the war... it's too bad that it happens. But this is marginal. There are always winners and losers." The common understanding is that peace can be attained only if one part overpowers the other one. And the one we support will prevail.

One would wonder what S has seen in Mariupol that makes him speak so differently about the place that he called home and that was destroyed by the war. In today's gospel only Christ is the answer to the loss of those we love. But how much faith do we require to believe in resurrection? This was the question we reflected on Friday at the mission. Do we need a little faith or a great faith in order to see the engendering of life within the community? A volunteer replied that he has more faith in the resurrection: "I am more inclined to believe in it than to believe in the kindness of people. That there is real kindness left in the world today. An honest kindness that has no agenda."

We remember at times that the good news of the resurrection is brought to us by Christ who first descended into hell. The One who walks through hell and knows its power and deceit. The One who tested its limits in order to overcome it. It might be the same with the people today: those who have seen the evil that deforms the face of humanity in us saw its limits and they bring to us a desire for kindness. They can see kindness here in Toronto even though they are sleeping on the streets.

It is important to listen to both S. and our new volunteer. Both lost a part of their life that will not come back and yet they have a belief in the kindness of man. In hell they've seen the ruins of mankind, that's why they can see the little kindness left in us here and desire to partake of it. We mistakenly think that the real loss makes us hate life itself. (Hate understood, as br Luke was saying on Friday, as a way of detaching from it and to find an allegiance with something else. To opposite it). From talking to those who have personally experienced loss through the war, we see that they are looking even more now for a new life and a renewal of it. It is those who have not been touched by war in a personal way who desire death for the other. It is time to make personal humanity's loss today so that we do not hate the life of others. If we lived loss and still hate life, it means that we probably did not really love what we lost. And the hate is a result of our individual lack of love.

The real love for what is lost in humanity makes us to desire peace. Because the smallest crumb of love brings us closer to Christ and His resurrection. Like the parents of the little girl today. Because they loved much, they were the first to receive in their sorrow the good news.

The resurrection also means that Christ trusted us with the little kindness left in us so the resurrection would not be in vain and disbelieved by all. It is by partaking of this kindness together, partaking of what

is left, that we can make people believe in the resurrection. The place from where the peace that surpasses any understanding is given to us.

**Mission church collections of 1 Sunday: Oct 22 2023, Church Donations 1,111, candle box 27.50**

**Community news:**

- This coming Friday we celebrate our annual volunteer appreciation night. There are rumors that we need to dress up. People were wondering what that meant. If you have questions, ask Raymond. He always brings his best suit for the event. All are invited. Please bring a friend with you so the joy of those who are celebrated could be shared.
- On Wednesday, Professor Paul Ladouceur will return to speak to us about the teachings of Mother Maria. We want to thank him for that and to say that his teachings were nourishing.
- Do not forget about the Psalm Session with father, on Tuesday evening at 7:30pm, through zoom. Father started to reflect on Psalm 13 (12). **“How long O Lord?...”**