



10th Sunday of Luke
The Gospel According to Luke 13:10-17

“And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her...”

J. lives up the street and she often comes to the Mission. If somebody could fit the description of the woman in the gospel today, that would be her. She uses a walker to go around, bending over it, not able to come inside because of her condition. Last week she came back after some time. She’s been in the hospital, in a critical condition. “They used those machines on me to bring me back... O boy, I was very scared. I was so scared. I am not going to end up there again”. Judging by the way she described the entire event, it sounded like a case of overdose. She wants to come back and receive some help. To talk to somebody. She is scheduled to see a psychiatrist. She has her hope.

On Saturday she came back in front of the Mission. She did not know exactly what she needed, maybe she just wanted to be around. Johan saw her and brought her food outside, setting up a table, together with a young person to keep her company, so she would not eat alone. It seemed like a long shot for her to come inside.

It is not only the infirmity that makes J. like the woman in the gospel today. It is also her quiet presence. She never asks for anything if not approached by another person. Even when she is tired and scared, as she says, she always has a smile, and she is ready to talk. She is very kind but despite that she has not spoken to her daughter for years and she has no hopes of that happening in the future. It is hard to understand how such a meek and humble spirit carries all this burden. How can the devil have bound her for all this time?

“I direct the eyes of my heart to You in heaven, O Savior.

Save me, I pray, shining on me Your resplendence.”

(First Antiphon. Mode 2)

Where is the water that washes our eyes so we can see the humble around us? When looking at those who are humble at heart, the soul is lifted high. The heaviness of walk is coming from the avoidance of the soul, who does not look upon the one who is most humble. By associating with the lowly, the life regains its own dynamics. The power and the strength of creativity that moves all creation touches our soul when the heart is attentive to the humility of the holy people of God.

Attentiveness, as we learned from the sermon of Wednesday (by St. Gregory of Nyssa) is a matter of the heart. It is the heart who notices and stays present in vigil to the suffering of the one who is unnoticed, because that’s the place where the Theophany of God is revealed. In the synagogue today, Jesus stops from preaching because He notices the woman who is never healed, but always irrelevant to the community at large. Insignificant to the many, the abandoned soul cannot escape the gazing of God. God can never speak enough to us. Because everything he says is true and full of compassion. The mercy and the sweetness of His word are healing for what is broken in us. And yet He stops from teaching today

because “behold ...”: the woman who is bent over, the woman who is never seen and who is always omitted by all in interactions, is present. Bent by Satan for 18 years, she does not ask Him anything because she has learned to be unnoticed. One would wonder why she came to listen to God if she does not ask for anything. But this is how the humility of the heart expresses itself. A silence that has no demands and no resentments.

The one who is ignored by all is in our midst. It is her humility that stops the Word of God talking to us because she has been ignored and today, she gains His full attention. If we think that today God is silent to us it is precisely because He is attentive to those whom the community ignores. The one who is less important than our pets receives today the full attention of God. His silence for us is an invitation to a place of gathering. To a place of hope. Where humility can be learned and shared because it is so real. It is the welcoming reality where God is always desired and invited.

We have at times things to do, and we are busy with errands. Other times we are lost within ourselves. Active or inactive, the gospel tells us today the priority of our life lies with those who come our way in humility. The one who is unnoticed has become a priority for God. So, when he or she comes our way, the time stops because the eternity of God is always present there. And this is the place where we all want to be.

Within the community we learn to be present to those who are naturally ignored. To set the table, even outside, and to bring about company to the poor that eats in secret. It is the place where the prayer is born because we made the first step and ask God to do the rest. To heal those who have been afflicted because we are learning their names and get to know their heart. The humility that we meet in the heart of those who are bent over and ignored is the faith that moves the community towards life and truth.

Community life

- The painting done by Jenny on Saturday reveals the woman holding a candle. The light shines better on her face, so we can recognize in her the countenance of God.
- Tony and James had surgery this week on St Nicholas’s feast day. They prayed the week before for healing and faith during the operation. Vasiliki shared with us that James is doing well even though he is yet in pain. Tony wrote to us to tell us that the surgery was a success, and he was very thankful for the community praying for him. He is still in pain, but with hope.



This coming week do not forget

Friday December 15 at 6 pm: Moleben for the fast

Reading of the Psalter and Confessions heard until 9 PM.

Saturday December 16 at 11:00 am: St. Nicholas is coming at the Mission. Let the children come to him. Invite them to the feast. The donkey and the sheep will be present as well, if there was any doubt about that.



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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