



*“The Lord said this parable:*

*“A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many;...”*”.

*First Antiphon*

**“From Babylon You rescued the captives of Zion. O Logos, also pull me up from the passions to life.”**

It is not easy at times to understand what Hector is saying when he answers a question at the mission or when he talks to you at the table over a double-double. His thoughts always carry a meaning, but it is most of the time expressed in images and symbols on which one needs to ponder to figure them out. It was not so this week on Thursday when we asked a question before the meal. He was clear and precise. The question was about one thing that does not bother us today. Because we seem to be most of the time on the edge or ready to fight or flight. We should come at times to a situation that just does not bother us. The question was not profound by any means, but Hector’s answer was: “For me, it does not bother me that I have no friends. I love being alone ... I have imagination, a lot of imagination, I spend time creating things... “.

Now, these words said by anybody else but Hector would sound strange. The truth is that Hector lives like a modern hermit on the streets of Toronto. He is always alone and in a good mood. He always brings things he made with his hands out of materials that he finds on the street, hiding a freedom in his heart which is not easy to comprehend and to relate with. Just before lunch he was showing Linda two pieces of naïve art he had made with his hands out of a thick wire. “You know what they are?” he asked Linda... “Look, this is a knot, you can pull the string through; the other one looks the same but if you pull the string through it gets loose, free... You get free.”

Hector’s words carry a prophetic message today for many people wounded by isolation and the brokenness of community life. The modern alienation of the human soul that comes from a self-determination of the community at large. When the community lives according to its own will, their sons and daughters are hurting out of this isolation that closes within itself. What Hector tells us is that there is a path for people who are hurting within the city, within the family life and within the heart by this alienation of the soul. There is a path of holiness, and as Elisha said on Friday, when reflecting on today’s gospel, we have no excuse not to become holy.

We have to use our creativity to come out of it. A creativity that comes to us through the touch of the Holy Spirit. The tendency is to harm ourselves more when being hurt by lack of community life. Hector thinks there is a path in this alienation where the soul can find communion with God. He is a real witness in Toronto.

The man who is preparing the banquet in the parable today find himself betrayed by his friends and lonely. He opens his house and his heart for his friends just to get hurt. He finds out what abandonment and betrayal looks like. He finds himself alone and full of rage. And yet, in this stage he does not close in himself. He does not forget that his heart is made for communion. He uses his creativity for creating communion by bringing in the poor and the lame and compelling those on the hedges.

We know from the scriptures the pain of God abandoned by men on the cross. Those to whom He revealed Himself from very close. Those who knew His mercy. It is always the friends who betray because they already experienced communion.

What the gospel tells us today is that when God is betrayed by those with whom he had a covenant, His creativity, when it comes to the salvation of man, manifests itself within the poverty, illness, and marginalization of His people. It is here that the joy of communion is rekindled.

***We need to come out of our organized life, to make the journey from our busy life, like the magi, from Persia, to a place of encounter with Christ.*** (paraphrasing a part of the sermon of St. John Chrysostom read by br Luke during the vigil on Friday evening)

During our reflection on the gospel on Friday, Mohamed (who is from old Persia like the magi) said that the people who refused the invitation, refused the joy of the banquet. A joy that only the gathering of many can bring to the soul. He said this was because they had an organized life. A life that they had figured out already. Mohamed said that we had to let go of this structure and not be resistant to the spirit that leads us. Thus, we discover a place of vulnerability. We get to know the part of our life where we think we are good for nothing. The poor, the lame and the marginalized don't have a structure. They don't have a life that is busy, centered around a goal. It is because of that, that they find the freedom to come to the banquet.

In our lives, we all find ourselves in this place at times. And the tendency is to go back to a structure that we lost. To something that organizes our life. Mohamed thought that this is the time when we have to prepare ourselves for something new. For a new life. To trust where the spirit takes us. To a place of gathering and joy. He thought that this is precisely what he experienced within our community. After he surrendered and he let go of his will to put his life in a certain order.

Mission church collections of 2 Sundays: Dec 3 & Dec 10, 2023, Church Donations \$632, Candles box \$78.50

### ***Community life:***

**St Nicholas this year** brought within the community a gathering of children and parents as we have not experienced for some time. Brother Luke's invitation to them was not rejected. It is a sign that the communion is real and desired. It is a sign that the work done within the community during the year by Br Luke has brought plenty of fruits. The presence of children always brings hope and new life. Through his relentless work, br Luke has let the children come to the Lord, thus bringing the young joy back to us. We'll try to connect more with them during the year and make more room within the community for those who sing with a joyful heart.

### **Reflection on the gospel during the week - on the faith of the little one: Mark 9:10-13**

"It occurs to me that the disciples fear taking the rising from the dead literally, because that is such an awesome thing.

They also fear losing their Rabbi to death, and do not yet comprehend what they are not meant to yet comprehend, if that makes sense.

All would be revealed to them in due time.

They just needed to share the faith of those thousands of people who were following Jesus.

It seems to me, in the gospel, the most simple have the greatest faith.



To receive Christ as a little child is to enter into the Kingdom of God.

I believe all the disciples' questionings of Jesus were questions that were meant to be asked, so that Christ's story could be told again and again for generation after generation." (Elisha)

**Do not forget: Psalms reflection with Father on Tuesday at 7:30 pm**

When the creativity of the “chosen” community does not produce communion with the poor and marginalized it produces war and death:



**December 18 - 25**

<b>Tuesday</b>	8:30 am 7:30 pm	Morning Prayer Psalms Study – via zoom	<b>Wednesday</b>	4:00 pm 6:30 pm 7:45pm	Vespers Bridges Molben – prayer for peace
<b>Thursday</b>	8:30 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Jesus Prayer	<b>Friday</b>	7:00 am 12:30pm 2:00pm	Royal Hours for Nativity Noon Hours Jesus Prayer
<b>Saturday</b>	9:00am	Morning Prayer	<b>Sunday</b>	8:30 am 5:00pm	Divine Liturgy Great Compline

**Monday: - 8am Divine Liturgy of St Basil**

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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, December 17, 2023

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