

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

After reading the gospel on Friday:

"It is not easy", Eliana said, "I try everyday. But still, it is not easy. Try to be kind with people, with everybody. It is not easy." George said the same while he was still pondering on the gospel. "That's a tricky one. How to really do that every time..." The gravity of his short answer reflected a long life lived with integrity in fulfilling the commandments. And the greatest commandment of the law is the one who is the most demanding because it requires all the heart. The entire essence of our being. George does not release this lively energy in one breath but slowly, he takes a deep breath every day within the community.



"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

"I live in this new building, with my children, with middle class and upper middle-class people. I am very grateful. You don't know how grateful I am. But the neighbours... because I heard about the neighbours ... you know, they keep moving in and moving out. And even when they stay there longer, I try so hard to fit in. And it does not work. They are so cold. So ignorant of myself. They don't care at all. They can do something for you and be polite, but in the end, I am still invisible for them, I don't exist for them. And it is so hard. And I keep trying. You know, I have a university degree, but because I am a minority, I am not like them, I don't fit. I mean nothing for them." She starts crying (a single mother of two children).

"I feel that every good thing we do, we do it out of selfishness. You can help a hundred people and you just do that because it makes you feel good. You do it out of selfishness. That's why here I think it is different, because we don't try to help people, but we try to be with them, to be with each other." (Mohamed)

"You know", says Tony, "there was this person that I had some problem with. And I try to say *hi* to him, to greet him. You know how much energy it took me to do that? A lot of energy. And he does not answer to me. He ignored me. I felt invisible. What did I accomplish? Nothing, I thought. And you know how much energy it took me to say hello to him? But my sponsor told

me that what I did was good. It was good I tried to make peace with him. But what should I do now?"

It took so much energy to say hello But for him I am invisible.

"If we do anything good, we don't expect any reward from people. The reward comes from God if we do anything good. The little we do ... it is God who is rewarding, not the people." (a new volunteer from Africa)

"I direct the eyes of my heart to You in heaven, O Savior. Save me, I pray, shining on me Your resplendence." (First Antiphon – Orthros today)

"I don't know what to say ... the more I cry the more I receive love in my heart. I know, but this is true. With hard work everything is possible. Every time, the more I cry the more I open my heart". (Mima, joining the gospel reflection after talking to Chris)

"What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?"

It is beautiful to love Christ for who Christ is. This is the knowledge in which man can make his boast (third ode Orthros). To reach in life the moment in which God is loved by man for Who God is. Not because of Whom I want Him to be for myself but for Whom He is for all.

It is hard, very hard, as Eliana said, it takes all your energy, and it makes you invisible to people. It makes you feel like a failure and defeated, rejected and disconsidered. It makes you question your own identity and forget your name because it is not often uttered within the group. And yet, it is beautiful to love God for Who God is. Because the tears are healing for the heart, and they teach her mercy. Who would have known that the "dew of heaven" are the tears that were shed, making known to the heart the piercing of love?

There is plenty of the beautiful knowledge within the community. Of this revelation of knowing with your own heart and your own mind who Christ is. As father said during the reflection on Wednesday, the prophecy about Christ is always fulfilled in the temple among the lowest ones. They become bearers of the fulfilment of the prophecy within their heart and within their arms they carry the innocent ones. Today, just as in the historical time of Jesus, the wisdom of geopolitics fails and destroys the whole community (Jerusalem would have been destroyed completely by the Romans just about 70 years after Jesus was presented into the temple). We sense this failing today also. And we think that no one cares because the destruction is universal and those who do good remain indifferent to all kinds of authorities. We find though within the community that there are real tears for the real sorrow that we see today. Innocent tears that open the hardest of hearts. The lowest among us continue to be the fulfilment of the prophecy and they gather in the temple in our postmodern times, just as they did in the ancient times. They do not ask for much, just one thing: to be heard. Because it is in the tears of those who care beautifully about who God is that the humanity can regain its dignity. Somehow, they water all creation and make all things new. Because the grace of the Holy Spirit loves the streams of many waters.

From the community, **on listening:**

“Did you hear that Nichita? The mission is closed on Feb 17. It is closed because it is open on Friday. I know because I listen... I always listen to Br Luke. On Feb 17 we go to Scarborough. It is a special day”. (Jenny, on Saturday at the mission, about the importance of listening)

On Thursday morning, I was talking to a person who does not often come to the mission. But when he comes, he speaks from the heart. After we talked for a few minutes, he asked me if I have met people with a life story like his. I confessed that I had. “What are people looking for?” That was a real question that took me by surprise and found me unprepared. People look for many things. We all look at the end for forgiveness and reconciliation.

I was not right in my two-sentence answer to him. He did not say that to me but he shared a personal story, in which the answer came naturally at the end. The first thing people look for is to be listened to. In the first place, wrongdoing happens because the innocent one is not listened to. Abuse silences the voice of the innocents. Within the soul, that voice can turn into hatred. We all hope it turns into prayer. The first thing a person in need looks for is to be listened to. To be noticed and welcomed. Because they have been silenced for all this time. To be listened to with a heart that cares for the story and for the injustice done. This is maybe why Jesus is still silent today on the feast of the presentation, just as he was at the Nativity.



God is silent today because he listens to the voices of those who cry. When we partake in this silence of God through prayer, we partake in the cry of those who have been labelled as indifferent. The undesirable ones. And by partaking of this silence, we become like them, and that’s the moment when our inner hate turns into prayer.

For the coming week:

- Tuesday psalm at 730...continuing the study of psalm 14
- Wednesday 630 pm we continue our bridges Fr. Steinhardt Series we will watch an interview with Elena Kostyuchenko, who wrote a book called "Why I love Russia" . Modern contemporary Russian society like any society is complex and has many different voices, part of being a peace maker is to learn to listen to voices that are on fringe of society, often they can teach essential lessons to us. bring a friend....
- Jody Seger who recently died will be buried from this church this Wednesday at 10 am
- In the evening at supper time a makaria "memorial"supper will be offered to the poor for the repose of her soul. Please feel free to attend any of these event.If any one would like to visit sick people or shut in as way to live out their orthodox faith in the service of others, please speak to father Nicolaie.
- You will find by the door cloth antidoron bags please use these bags to receive the antidoron and to take some home to use during the week. The bags avoid for crumbs of the blessed bread to fall on the ground, the bags also make it easy to store and transport in a respectful manner the atidoron bread to your house. The bags are made with love and care by people at good neighbours in Scarborough.
- You received recording of the great ectenia Lord have mercy please listen to it at home and be encouraged to sing it out loud on Sunday during the liturgy...the recordings are made so you can learn some of the usual music we use on Sunday.

February 5 - 11

Tuesday	8:30 am 7:30 pm	Morning Prayer Psalms Study – via zoom	Wednesday	4:00 pm 6:30 pm 8:00pm	Vespers Bridges Compline
Thursday	8:30 am 12:30 pm 2:00 pm	Morning Prayer Noon Hours Jesus Prayer	Friday	7:00 am 12:30pm 2:00pm	Orthros Noon Hours Jesus Prayer
Saturday	9:00am	Morning Prayer	Sunday	7:00am 8:30am	Orthros Divine Liturgy



St Silouan Chapel at St John's Mission
 155 Broadview Ave. Toronto, ON M4M 2E9
 T: 416-466-1357 E: info@stjohnsmission.org W: stjohnsmission.org

St Zoticos Orthodox Church at Good Neighbours Mission
 193 Markham Rd Scarborough, ON M1J 3C3
 T: 647-358-4105



We are an apostolate of the ecumenical patriarchate "Mother Church of Christ's poor" under
 the Omophoron of Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

St. Silouan Chapel, February 17, 2024

5 of 5

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