



“But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.”

We pray so the failure of the wicked servant does not become attractive to us. To seduce us, to make us feel pity for him and to generalize the evil within our consciousness.

There is a generalized skepticism about doing good. The collective fatalism that paralyzes the soul. We heard during the reflection on the psalms on Tuesday: “there are none that do it good...”; we heard it also at Bridges on Wednesday, when the

Russian journalist we listened to spoke about a communal hopelessness that accepts the growing evil. An acceptance of sin in us that leads to death. A coping with the encounter of evil that gives in the end the illusion of a short-lived comfort. To illustrate this today, we picture, for instance, the reality of euthanasia in Canada, which touches all of us collectively and it seems there is a Canadian fatalism in it. Nothing can stop it from taking over. It is the same with the love of war; it seems greater than life itself and catastrophic. And it is. Its face is not enough to scare people away from it. Evil does not need anymore to pretend it is good; it wins people over through what it is.

We also see this in us, the lack of ability to do good and we want to become a witness to that. We heard it also on Friday when we reflected on the gospel. The false fear of a soul can contaminate the life of the whole community, and the belief in the gospel. “Where is the joy in living the gospel?” asks in triumph the skeptical voice in our mind, the voice we are afraid to silence because it has become the narrative of the entire community. How can there be any joy in this amputated humanity today? We are getting worse, and we should be happy?

On Wednesday evening, T. came to pick up dinner in front of the mission. After praying in the chapel, he shared stories about going to a new church for meals. He is genuinely thankful for food and for prayer. He is honest and he speaks well. We shared news of the day, and we talked about the funeral as well. He knew Judy. “She was a kind soul, very kind.” He then started his confession. “But you know, that’s how it is with all of us who struggle with these addictions. You don’t know when you can die. You don’t want to, but there is such a thin line. We are so broken. But you know, all these people, they have a good soul... You can see their soul through them... If it was not for them, I would have been dead for a long time. The goodness of these people picked me up from the street. They saved me. These people who are so broken, they did me so much good.” T. shares in this brokenness with them. His confession is true. There is a thin line in this broken world that he tries to follow, even though there is no guarantee that this would change things for him personally. He is indebted to the goodness he met on the streets, in debt for ever to the broken people through whom a soul can be seen.

One word from the gospel that stayed with us on Friday, shared by one of the volunteers, was “trade”. She thought the talents are the blessings we receive. We trade them with other people who need them. The king leaves on a long journey. He leaves all his goods with his servants. There is none who does good anymore. The king is gone. And there are people in need, who must trade for the king’s goods in order to live. It is the servants who have all the goods entrusted to them by the master. There is nobody else. For those in need who wait for the trade to happen, it is a matter of life and death. For the servants, it is a matter of being faithful.

The generalized skepticism of the world does not fit with the logic of the gospel today. Most of the servants in the parable are faithful – two out of three. There is only one who buries the talent. As it was with the apostles, only one wanted the money for himself. And that broke the community apart and led to the cross of the only One Who is good.

Following the logic of the gospel we could say the same today: the treachery of one is causing the sorrow of many. But most servants are faithful, even though broken and poor, they keep nothing for themselves. And this is the reality of the gospel that we see within the community, there is an abundance of good done by the people. And a joy that is as natural and life giving. The goods are multiplied. They are growing. The gospel is true because it is natural for people to do good: “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28) It is also true because it manifests itself within the community and it wins people over. It becomes the norm, and it outnumbers evil. Again, we see it within the reality of the community life here, we see it in the gospel, we remembered the stories from Wednesday night, within the life of “ordinary” people there is genuine good that manifests itself within the land, in which all want to partake, to share a common destiny and a communal faith that leads to unity. Because “there is no ordinary life, only people who live to do good.

"At the acceptable time I have listened to you and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (today’s epistle II Corinthians 6:1-10)

The evil starts from one that spreads it to many. From a rotten apple, the whole basket will become bad, it is just a matter of time. That’s why it is removed. The milk becomes sour if a drop of sourness touches it. It has one source, from Adam to humankind. The life of the community waits for the repentance of one sinner. Because in Christ, the New Adam, the world is moving towards salvation, because the first fruit of death is giving life to all. And all are waiting for the repentance of one heart. That is within me. The only one that hinders the whole community to complete communion with God. That’s why, in Christ, it is within the heart that communion is about to happen. In the heart of the sinner, whose last judgement has occurred already because the logic of time within the gospel is irreversible. Today there is good news and new life: we are all entrusted to do good. The grace, as somebody was saying, is selective, we can dare say, because it always chooses the sinner to repentance. Because the grace of God works within our weaknesses.

Who are the people who traded with the faithful servants?



The purpose of the Church is not condemnation but liberation, not punishment but salvation. Every unfortunate and tormented soul eagerly awaits to receive solace and consolation. The Lord embraces everyone without discrimination, because He sees in each individual the unique and unrepeatable image of God. This is the message of today's feast of Saint Tryphon, the patron saint of seemingly insignificant farmers, gardeners, and viticulturists. No one is forgotten! No one is excluded from the salvation offered by our Savior!" (patriarch Bartholomew)

*"Our Church stands against violence, and even in the case of self-defence, we see it as the wrong answer to a wrong problem. Those who live by the sword eventually die by the sword. We pray for the peace of the world at every Service, but we see peace giving way to aggression and war at seemingly every turn, especially in the land where our Savior walked."
(Archbishop Elpidophoros of America)*

Announcements:

Today is the feast of St Blaise, bishop and martyr. Father will bless throats for those who desire it and have remembered to bring them.

Why do we bless throats on St Blaise's day?

Blaise was named bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, 316 AD, and he was very popular among his contemporaries for performing numerous miraculous healings. He lived as a hermit even after being named bishop, converting the cave in which he lived — located in the forest of Mount Argeus — into his episcopal see.

Tradition has it that one day Bishop Blaise saved a child who had choked on a fish bone — hence the ancient custom of blessing the throats of his devotees on his feast day. Other stories speak of Blaise's love for animals, whom he also cured. According to an ancient medieval tale, sick or injured animals came to his cave on Mount Argeus to be cured and, in return, they did not harm him or bother him when he prayed.

Tuesday at 7:30 pm: Psalm session on Zoom

Wednesday at 6:30 pm: Bridges

What are the ways to make peace? Psalm 14:3 asks. Every day we pray for peace, many times in the liturgy, so we should be interested in the subject.

Last week we heard of three things that lead to Peace: 1) learning about who the other is, 2) learning to listen and 3) developing an intellectual flexibility in front of difficult situations.

This Wednesday we are going to learn about the place silence has, as a way to be peace makers. We will read and discuss an interesting article on the need of silence in society.

Mark your calendars!!!

Feb 17 The mayor will attend the celebration of the 7th anniversary of Good Neighbours, at 2 pm

3 pm: Artoclasia will be celebrated as thanksgiving for seven beautiful years.

Please come and be part of what the premier of Ontario described as "a milestone for Good Neighbours"

March 9th, 12pm - 8pm. A retreat right here at the mission open to anyone who has lost a loved one through MAiD. If you know of anyone who has suffered a loss this way or if you want to volunteer for the day please let fr Nicolaie know.

February 12 - 18

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



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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, February 11, 2024

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