

**You rose again**

*So that we might learn  
How to love one another*

**You rose again**

*So that we might see  
The humanity in the eyes  
of the poor*

**You rose again**

*So that we might not be  
afraid  
To visit the sick and the  
imprisoned*

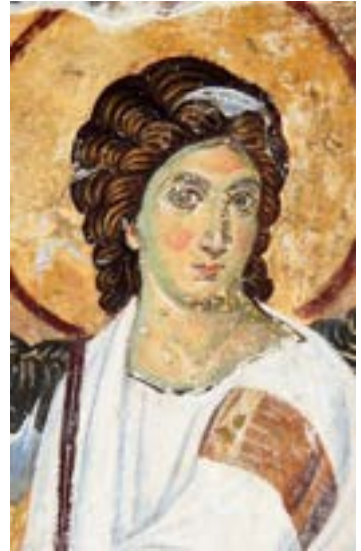
**You rose again**

*So that we might feel  
hope  
On our darkest days*

**You rose again**

*To save the whole world  
To save me  
Unworthy though that I  
am.*

*(by Elisha)*



**Sunday of the Myrr-Bearing Women (Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8)**

*"Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, He is not here; see the place where they laid Him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him, as He told you."*

Last Sunday we learned that after the resurrection the truth is recognized by the healing wounds and the beauty by its new scars. In the light of the resurrection, there is no truth without healing wounds, as there is no genuine beauty without scars. Both carry these signs after the resurrection that prove their authenticity so they cannot be imitated. Today the lamb is unblemished because of its healing wounds. And the bridegroom is beautiful because He does not hide His lifegiving scars.

Today we learn something new about the truth: that it is gentle. It is gentle because the angel does not need to cover its face but proclaim freely. The proclamation of the resurrection, through the voice of the angel, happens in gentleness. That's what Eliada thought. The truth, just like love, does not boast or impose its presence. He does not demand faith but is rather rather kind with those who are afraid of his reality. He longs for joy in the heart of man, but when he finds fear and sorrow, he does not turn away but is rather patient until the joy is received and the peace shared. He also gives a path and a purpose and prepares a place of

encounter that is familiar to us. He looks for communion but does not leave anybody behind. He takes care even of the one that lied about him at a time of distress: Peter - "I do not know the man..." If a lie made a spectacle in the market place, breaking down the community when the cross was magnified, just to have everybody scattered at the end (beating their breasts), the truth happens within the communion of two or three who are gathered together with the purpose of caring. Because the truth looks for the company of love, as imperfect as that love might be. And so, the truth is shared in the simplicity of heart in a personal manner. It could only be received by faith while he is giving proof of his existence to the eyes who are doubtful but look close enough. And yet he trusts the heart of man with faithfulness because he knows it cannot resist to the new hope.

The truth also makes himself known in the witness of the one who has a purity of heart, that can be reflected in the countenance of his presence. It is encountered by those whose steps take them through dark places, where the humanity has been disposed. They do so, because they are being faithful to a love they experienced within their heart. The truth knows what we are looking for and helps us towards the encounter. It reminds us of its faithfulness and of its own generosity of revelation. The truth changes the course of action for those who believe in him and while he is gentle with the doubtful heart of man, being proclaimed with kindness, he makes people tremble and be fearful of his new life. He changes the pace of life of those who listen to it. Instead of walking, running becomes the norm. Not running away from danger, but running toward the encounter, to the place where truth makes himself known within the gathering of the community.

As much as we love him and we want to keep him close to our soul, being dear to us, the truth always surprises and changes our plans, as noble as they might be. Because it is the truth that reveals the story and we rejoice because he does not desire to be alone but invites our presence, out of freedom and love for the life of man.

It is the truth that we heard being witnessed. And it is the truth that we witness today. Within the emptiness of our heart, where there is a sign of new life and in the darkness of our time, where the truth brings light that cannot be overtaken. The truth of the resurrection is everything we have, but this makes our poverty dignifying and desired by all, because its richness nurtures every human soul. At times, we want the peace of the truth to settle quickly in the heart of those who mourn and to bring new joy for those who lost so much without being reconciled. Other times, it overtakes us, and we find ourselves left behind by the peace and new life manifested fully and surprisingly within the faithfulness of a heart which we thought was buried. The truth cannot be hastened as it cannot be slowed down. One thing we know now is that it has overtaken death and it has become eternal for the simple life of man who is called now to encounter him in humility, together with all those who are longing to see his face, who now is no longer hidden.



***The heart of Thomas***  
*By Elisha*

*O let me see You  
Ascend into Heaven  
O gracious Lord,  
So that I might be  
certain  
That I no longer ought  
To be sorrowful  
Over Your suffering,  
Over leaving us.*

*I still cannot believe  
That You would have  
done this*

*Just for lowly me,  
A wretch of a sinner.*

*So let me see Your  
Hands,  
And let me touch Your  
Side,  
...And I believe!*

*As I drink from Your  
cup,  
I am renewed of spirit  
In Your love and  
mercy,  
so completely.*

*And You reveal to me  
The Cross I shall  
joyfully bear,  
And the narrow path  
You have set before  
me,  
Simply to love and  
care for my neighbour.*

*Forgive me*

*For ever doubting You  
O my Beloved Christ.*

*And I shall take up  
That Cross  
And follow You  
All the days of my life.*

*In thanksgiving,  
In peace,  
And in my bitter tears  
of repentance.*

*Always seeing Your  
face before me,  
And awaiting the  
glorious day  
Of Your resurrection,  
O my beloved Christ.*

*Blessed be the Name  
of The Lord  
forevermore!*

## *A community sister*

**House of grace** was founded with the blessing of Madonna House. The mission of St John was inspired by the house of Grace. At the source of their community was the love shared by the couple that founded it. Camile died since of cancer but his wife Agnes, alone with their children, continued this important witness. We asked her to write simply of what daily life is like for them. Ordinary people choosing the path of Peace in a land perpetually at war.

### **Days in House of Grace**

It is difficult to talk about a day in House of grace because every day is different. So, I tried to give you an impression.

Beside the activities in our Greek-Catholic Church, with a weekly Holy Liturgy, sacraments, religious meetings, concerts and lectures, we have three main projects: released prisoners, families in need and a program for youth.

#### **Released prisoners:**

The men are allowed to stay with us for their last third of their sentence. The 17 men stay for 9 months and are obliged to work outside. A governmental committee is responsible of them and takes final decisions. Twice a month they are allowed to visit with their families for 72 hours. Counselors are guiding them during nights and the weekends they are staying at the house.

#### **A “normal” day:**

They get up, make their breakfast, and leave to work. They must be back at 5 pm in order to shower, eat lunch and then participate in workshops, sessions and personal talks with the social worker. Every week two of them have to prepare lunch for all and each one of them have a duty to fulfill, like cleaning the floor, the kitchen, the compound.

At 10 pm they sit together with the counselor and make a review of their day. In order to get some rest, they have to turn in their phone.

## **Needing Families:**

Our social worker is receiving families and people in need from 8.30 till 13.30, for 4 days a week, counseling them, writing letters to governmental offices for their sake and making contacts with all the institutions she is working with. She is preparing the list for the food packages delivery in coordination with our responsible, choosing the sick needing medication we provide. In order to get a picture of the situation she visits families. She also organizes workshops for families and women. A second-hand clothes shop is also a part of the family program. Three volunteers are taking care of the shop, receiving and sorting the clothes, receiving people and preparing the bags we send to other parts.

## **Youth program:**

Our youth program is open in the afternoon for children aged 7 to 16. Our coordinator is organizing workshops, sports and other activities. Together with some students, he provides tutoring and sometimes talks with the families. Twice a year, they go for a trip and in between the children go to some activities outside of House of grace. Due to the war, the program is limited because of security reasons.

## **Staff:**

Jamal, our director, is often responsible of other groups and organizations, prepares meetings and work shops for the staff. He is often invited to official events and meetings. There is the director of the released prisoners' program and with him another 3 social workers and 4 counselors. One employee is responsible for the counselors, food distribution, maintenance and providing all needed. We also occupy one social worker for the family program and a coordinator for the youth program. Beside there is a resource developer who comes twice a week. All our staff workers have different schedules and are arriving at different hours and days.

During the day, we often have visitors who come to see the church and hear about our work. Some people come just to have a chat and a cup of coffee. Every day is different, and we never know exactly how it will turn out. Before, some foreign groups arrived to know about House of grace, but since the war started, we receive only local groups.

## **Announcements (by Frank)**

We welcome back father Nicolaie from the annual clergy retreat. We are very grateful to father for taking this time to attend this diocesan event and bring our prayers with him to our Metropolitan.

**Tuesday** we resume the psalm study by zoom from 7: 30 pm to 8:30 pm

We will study the psalm that we hear every day during Pascha: let God arise!

**Wednesday at 6:30 pm** special Bridges: ever wondered what the psalms sounded like when David composed them or when they were sung in the temple?

Our Ethiopian brothers and sisters will lead us in the singing of psalm 68 using melody and instruments that come from ancient times and are still used in Ethiopia. Paschal treats will be offered at the end of Bridges.

**Friday at 7:00 am** - Divine Liturgy

Anyone interested in being part of the community at the refuge during the summer please speak to father Nicolaie.

There are several workshops and retreats planned.

This year we will celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration and the Dormition of the Theotokos at the refuge. So keep in mind as you plan your summer.

Please use the antidoron bags to receive the antidoron.

If you don't know what the antidoron is please speak to me (Frank).



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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, May 19, 2024

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