



Antiphon I and II

“The longing for God is unceasing in those who dwell in the desert, outside of the futile world as they are... With Your right hand embracing me, O Logos, keep me safe and shelter me, so that the fire of sin not burn me.”

R. heard about our breakfast program from his neighbour. The one that pitches his tent besides him. And he came. And coming for breakfast he heard about lunch as well. He is respectful and thankful. “I’ve been homeless for the last three months. Today I am getting the key. Everybody will be happy. The place is close enough for my son to go to his work and for my daughter to go to her school. We can be together again. Both are very happy with the location. They are with the grandparents now. Today I get the keys.” R. shares a few things about the park where he stays. There are a couple of other people. We are away from each other, but we make sure we clean the place every day. They let us stay there, because we leave at 7:00 am and come only in the evening. As he talks about the place where he stays, about his apartment and his children, he becomes visibly emotional. A type of emotion we take a glimpse at in the icons, of sorrow and joy that are kept together by gratitude. “I want to come back here. This really helped me these days to understand more. What would it be for me if I come here only when I need it? I feel really called to come and volunteer, you know, to give back ... but it is more than just giving back ... I feel I need to do that.” R. was honest in his words. His eyes were a testimony to them. His eyes that are beholding something new, to which he feels bound in a helpful way. “After a month, after I settle in in the new place, can I come back and help?”

“Behold. As the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, as the eyes of the handmaid look unto the hands of her mistress, so do our eyes look unto the Lord our God, until He take pity on us ...” (Ps 123:2)

The saying is that the eyes are the mirror of the soul. So, if you look into a person’s eyes you get a glimpse of the depths of their being. It might be so, but the eyes of man do not look into an empty space, but they always look for the Father. So, if we look into a person’s eyes we see the Father and the way man beholds Him. We might discover the Father being loved by the eyes who were granted the gift of tears. We can see the gratitude of man for Him or at times we can see the anger or despondency with which the Father is beheld. We see the suffering and despair, as we see the hope and fruits of prayer. We can see the eyes that trust or the eyes that don’t. We see the prayer of man to the Father every time because the longing is nothing else but the hope of a prayerful silence.

Antiphon 3. When they said to me, “Let us go into the courts of the Lord,” my spirit was glad and my heart rejoiced also.

It is enough for Christ to say a word and the apostles are coming. They leave everything because they recognize the voice. They were longing to hear it and to see his face. T. was wondering how

come the apostles immediately leave everything behind, whereas we need time. “I go every day to church and pray for help to change. And it takes time. For them it happens immediately. Why does it take time for us to follow Him?” T. is following Him already. It is the journey that changes us. If there is a change of the heart, there will be a change of the body as well. “You know, these thoughts they give me a lot of trouble ... but if we follow Christ, you know, if we go to heaven and there are still people in hell, how is that going to be? How can I be in heaven when I know there are people in hell, suffering?”

“Follow me ... And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.” Mat 4:18-2

Jesus is asking his disciples to follow Him to a specific place. The journey has a purpose. He is going to meet those who are waiting for him, being tormented by every kind of disease and of evil spirits. He comes to meet those who are waiting for Him in hell already because their longing has been long. The hell we made, and which we know from our own life. This is the place where Jesus takes his apostles. For them to see and witness the change of the community, the presence of the kingdom, the creativity of the Spirit and the forgiveness of sins - the fulfilling of the scriptures. The kingdom of God manifests itself within the heart of man when man reaches out for his brother who is seeing the fulfilment of the scriptures. God makes out of our sins the place where the new life is regenerated. Through the cross, within the tomb, the truth of the resurrection. It is so for the church to make in hell the place where the kingdom is revealed. We should not be afraid to follow Christ in hell but rather that we'll find ourselves alone in heaven.

Community life

“The bicycle thief” – On Saturday a young person from Iran who came to Toronto 4 years ago shared some of his struggles here. He was studying and he had an electric bike he would use to do deliveries. This would help him pay for his school and basic needs. “When they stole it, everything went downhill immediately. Nobody was waiting for me. Not even the school.” This story resembled an old Italian movie entitled “Bicycle thieves”. The story speaks with kindness about the way we are all vulnerable when tested in the desert. And the fall that comes with that in just a second. However, so it is also with the call. It is also testing us for some good and new we have not seen yet but for which we prayed continuously. It comes suddenly, like a rushing wind, and we don't want to be resistant to it.

Linda celebrated her 75th birthday this week. She was full of life and enjoyed everything, the prayer, the singing, the blessing, the present, the icon of St Xenia: “Oh, she was homeless like me.” When asked what advice she would offer to us who are younger, she said: “Never stop laughing”.

We received many donations for the poor this week, mostly financial, but mainly in kind.



St Silouan Chapel at St John's Mission

155 Broadview Ave. Toronto, ON M4M 2E9

T: 416-466-1357 E: info@stjohnsmmission.org W: stjohnsmmission.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 Omophorion of Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

St. Silouan Chapel, July 7, 2024

©2024 St. John the Compassionate Mission

3 of 3

www.stjohnsmmission.org