

The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple

*"... who has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by **the power of an indestructible life.**"*
(from today's epistle - Hebrews 7:7-17)

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

It is within the love for God and for the neighbour that life discovers its indestructible power. Being wounded and stripped down, it heals and rises again. Death comes in many ways and takes different forms, and yet nothing is stronger than the heart that loves in silence, while being pierced by the sword. All the other hearts pay homage to her at the very end. If death comes through a lie, life that prevails draws her victory from a heart that loves God in truth, so that the truth might be revealed to all, including to the heart that has betrayed. It is a different type of sorrow that is going to present itself to forgiveness. It is incomprehensible for us, who love little, and cannot understand with the heart, how much life can endure. If the power that gives strength to life resides in the incomprehensible love of God, the one that is opposing it – death, finds daily, through man, all kinds of ways to wound it. It is true that death came into the world through one man, and it continues to be so today. It continues to come into the world. Not only through one man but through many. But while it continues to come, it is now conquered by the one who shares his victory with all. And we all want to know him and keep him into our arms.

This is what St Simeon would have witnessed and testified. He lived a wounded life that found strength within the love of God and for his neighbour. He was a righteous man living in a time according to the covenantal love. Living in his life the love for God with all his heart and the love for his neighbour, he would have felt the sorrow of the community who falls short on its promise. Instead of glory, the community that God had chosen had been living in shame. With the taste of a collective betrayal, Simeon loves God alone with all his heart. His love is not without hope, because he knows the scripture and the promise of the One the community is betraying. His solitary love is connecting him with the suffering of the foreigner, of those who live in darkness, being pushed away and kept outside. Outside of what? ... Outside of a carcass which has been abandoned by life and the memory of it, instead of moving one to repentance, creates illusions of grandeur.

While living practically the love for God and for his neighbour, Simeon knows that only Christ can



save us from this collective movement towards self destruction. We see in his prayer, when he holds Jesus, that he prays for Israel from his heart, that it may have its shame covered by new glory and for the strangers to be warmed by the light in order to see Christ face to face. He prays for those who were rejected and undesired to see the face of Christ who loves them personally by name. What Simeon has hoped and lived against the evidence of his time is today fulfilled as a promise for all. Fulfilled in Christ. It is what a life that is faithful to the love of God and to the suffering of the “stranger” receives as a testimony in Christ.

Simeon, out of this love for God and for the neighbour, is sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit. He is not neglecting it. He rather moves with the Spirit because his heart was moved by the love of God and by the love for his neighbour. He is brought that day to the temple.

It is on this day that he finds out that he is not alone in his faithfulness. Not only does he encounter Christ, but he is the one who welcomes him into the temple. He embraces Christ with the same kindness with which he took care of those who did not know the kindness of the human touch. The icon of the entrance into the temple is the icon of a new community. Where the poor family, who had no means for a higher offering, presents the gift of the poor, where his solitary love for God and for the foreigners is mirrored by the piercing of the heart that ponders and loves in silence. They welcome together the heart that prays unceasingly and keeps vigil day and night. The community who was scattered before it is now united because Christ is within the gathering. They all look at the light who helps them see and listen to each other also.

The presentation into the temple, the beautiful feast of the light that shines in darkness that brings both glory to those who believe and light to those who were left aside forgotten, is linked with the celebration of the community at Good Neighbours. This year we celebrate its 8th anniversary. The community in Scarborough, even though it has been growing, judging from the number of people who encounter Christ there every day, still feels very young due to the freshness and the strength of life that the community exuberates with. Strength, because although fragile, the community knows the faithfulness to God and the suffering of the many strangers who found there a place of encounter, refuge and new life. It knows the poverty of the families who, although poor, bring an offering of life every day to the community. It knows the vigil in prayer for those who are killed at night in the neighbourhood. The community is an icon of a fulfilled promise in Christ. A light within a time that helps people to see the truth of their being and to regain their faithfulness in Christ. A light that warms many, both those who have no means to warm themselves and those who are suffering from a coldness of heart. The feast that we celebrate has for us a number: 8 years since the encounter. We know father felt alone there many times. It is through the faithfulness of one heart that the fulfilling of the promise is revealed to all. That washes away the shame of a community's betrayal and brings warm light to touch the eyes that were blinded by darkness. May God grant to all many blessed years!!

Dear All,

Please come and make a beautiful noise unto the Lord in gratitude for 8 years of mission work in Scarborough!

Wednesday February 5th, 2025

6 PM Divine Liturgy

followed by a potluck agape



The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple



Apolytikion of Presentation of Our Lord

“Rejoice Virgin Theotokos full of Grace, for Christ our God, the Sun of Righteousness, has dawned from you, granting light to those in darkness. And you, O Righteous Elder, rejoice, taking in your arms, the Deliverance of our souls, who grants us Resurrection.”

“By Your birth, You sanctified a virginal womb, and fittingly You blessed Simeon's hands, O Christ God; even now You have saved us by anticipation. Grant peace to Your faithful people whom You have loved, O only Lover of mankind.”(Kontakion)



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, February 2, 2025

5 of 5

©2025 St. John the Compassionate Mission

www.stjohnsmmission.org