



"For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Don't we know what it means for us to be part of a sinful and adulterous generation? To experience the consequences of a broken communion with God, in our own life, in the life of our children, in the life of the poor.

A generation that misses the mark, that fails "to seek peace and pursue it" (Ps 34:14). A generation that betrays. A generation that breaks communion with God while pretending to be faithful. A generation that does not look for forgiveness. Or is unable to do so. A generation that forgot what it means to be forgiven, to live without a burden. A generation that forgot to desire the goodness of communion, the joy of friendship with God. A generation that looks for answers and for solutions into the charming eyes of the abusers and accusers. We all partake within this sorrow of a broken communion. Today, Christ, with no partiality, calls us all to life.

What is left for God to do in the middle of our betrayal? To enter into our death, since we have become deaf to the good news of renewal of life? Can God, who is the God of the living, enter communion with the one who prefers to die? Can He become the God of the dead instead of the God of the living? He does become "... *the first fruit of the dead ... so, he can be Himself the first in all things.*" (St Basil - Anaphora) It is in Christ that God knows what it means to be human. And somehow, his mercy becomes sweeter than life itself (Ps 63:3).

The sign of Jonah is the sign given to an adulterous generation (Mat 12:39). When we avoid God, we end up alone in the belly of the whale. Only that we refuse to expose, like Jonah, the betrayal, and the boat is sinking in the storm, until we ask for the innocent to plunge into the sea.

The cross is the way through which God restores the communion with the one that betrays. The cross is the first sign, God's movement who initiates the restoration of friendship with man. When we miss the mark of communion, our arrows go straight into the heart of the king. They become the nails that keep his feet from stumbling upon the cross. Keep them still. God tells us to be still and to know that He is God (Ps 46:10). Instead, we kept Him still through our betrayal because we wanted Him to know we are just men. Why are we drawn to violence? Why can we not repent for it?

It is today indeed that Christ, without partiality, through the cross, reestablishes communion with man who is addicted to death. His voice is universally heard: *"If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

Who is going to follow him? The road is clear, “... a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to give light ...” (Exodus 14:32)

Christ speaks to all, but those who respond first are those who have the heart of the poor. A heart that experiences in its own way the betrayal, because the poor heart dared to care in a time that betrays our existence. The heart of the poor, who ate in secret; the heart of the poor, who was absent from the consciousness of the city; the heart of the poor, who was afraid of communion with Christ because of the many rejections. We might think that Christ’s call might not be heard by many followers. Suffering and public humiliation would not attract many. But the poor hearts are many. And they are not afraid of suffering because they already know it so well. They are not ashamed of Christ because their dignity of being human has been stolen. They are not afraid to lose their life because they were made to believe they have no soul. The heart of the poor knows what it means to pray to a God who is silent and yet to love Him beyond His unspoken words.

The heart of the poor loves the cross of Christ. Because Christ breaks today the world in which they have been silenced. The Father speaks to us all today but in the silence of a poor heart His words come about with the joy of communion that breaks the reality of absence. Their life was deemed worthless, now they joyfully offer themselves in communion to the One that values their soul more than the whole world.

A volunteer said on Friday that Jesus speaks to the poor in order for them to tell everybody that God is forgiveness. Through the cross, the alienation of man ends in communion with God. In Christ, God knows what it means to be human, and through His cross, man learns what it means to renounce violence while being hurt and betrayed. It is through the cross that man learns the solitude of God. The poor heart that answers first the call of Christ opens communion with God for the whole community. On the path of the cross, Jesus falls, and He needs help. Cyrus of Cyrene helps Him carry his cross. It is the same with the poor heart. At times it fails and needs help to carry the cross. It might be looking more broken than at the time the journey started, but around the cross of the poor heart, the alienation of a community had broken to into communion with God.

“Self is at the heart of existence. Through gratitude we render it to God as an offering”

(Br Luke on Friday on the gospel)

It was during Friday night’s vigil that this offering was on full display. The youngest person who kept vigil was an 8-month-old baby. She read at times the psalms together with her mother, carried in her parents’ arms. They chanted in the same tone. Who could have known that such a small cross, rendered to Christ in prayer, would bring joyful hope to a poor community? And through it, to the whole church and the whole world. Because her soul was more precious than the whole world. And somehow, that night in prayer, she just became aware of it. Please pray for the little one and her parents as they learn what it takes to prepare for their child’s baptism.



Picking up the cross as a brother or sister of mercy.

It transforms our evil and adulterous time in:

A time to learn and to grow

A time of a committed Orthodox life of work and service to others

A time of dedicated work to the poor and marginalized

A time to live fully immersed in the life, liturgy and ministry of the church

Personal typicon

Time of prayer (daily) ~

Time of service ~

Name and signature:

Brother/sister of mercy:

Date

Spiritual father:



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

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