

“Then the householder in anger said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame...’”



The parable of today's gospel reveals to us the time when the Father had to learn to love what is not perfect. Not very good. When he created man, he was very good. And the Father loved him for how good he was. Made in his image, the goodness of the Father, the son of man reflected in himself the purity of a heart meant to love beyond itself. Adam's first love was God, and this love was reflected in the face and heart of Eve. Today the Father is falling in love with the poor, the lame and those who live at the crossroads, uncertain of where to go or how to walk on the path of life. Those who do not yet follow Christ, yet still walk the way. Even now, the Father is falling in love with them. At the mission we see them more often these days: coming early in the morning, staying at times throughout the day, confused and without purpose, unable to explain why they remain. Somehow, in the church they feel that there is a Father who loves them dearly and personally. And therefore they hang around ...

It is because humankind is broken and destitute, hungry and lost. And the Father is enlarging His heart, learning to love what is not perfect. God does not go beyond Himself, because He encompasses all; yet when it comes to the poor, His heart becomes human—to walk among the broken, to eat with them, and to remain with them.

The love for the poor has a price: the pain of the Father, whose anger we hear today in the parable. He loved his friends, those who were invited. He had a special relationship with them, his dearest friends, and their refusal is a betrayal. Thus, the Father experiences in time what it means to be abandoned and rejected. In the parable, He reveals Himself as having a broken heart, full of pain, rejected by those closest to Him. He finds Himself alone. This is the moment when he falls in love with the poor. When we say at times that we look for God alone, we mean we look to be with God who has fallen in love with the poor. Therefore, his heart, which in the parable is depicted as his house, is not satisfied completely until it is filled with the entire broken humanity itself. Even though he has become man, he still loves as the Father. Because he is creative and transforms the pain of betrayal into a dynamis for new life. A completion of the story and creation of a new community.

It precisely what he opens for us as well. In our own life, he teaches the human heart that there is a new love to be discovered, a new relationship, which is accomplished by learning to love the poor, the lame and the blind. It is the love that heals a heart that has experienced abandonment after risking falling in love for real. It is how betrayal is vindicated within the broken heart, through the gift of new love. There is no other way. It is the path which is opened for humanity in order to find healing of the heart, and not linger at the crossroads of life, but instead to follow Christ who is thirsty for love in the broken hearted.

It is the path for the new community, the path of salvation, the path of life. And this time the Father is not disappointed or wounded, because in them He finds a steady and devotional love, a childish love that takes risks even when afraid, a love that, though betrayed as He was, forgives and loves over and over again. He discovers in them the new covenant, the church, his beloved bride, who though often destitute and cast aside, even left without a shepherd, has always waited for His voice to come. Faithful to the one who is late to come because He rests on the cross, the bride waits with love for His word, for Him to break the silence. Although afraid to be loved, the bride remains faithful to the One who has a broken heart, because she has already tasted His love.

As for those who rejected His love, His friends who cannot bear to be loved and who “make excuses for sin”, it is only a matter of time, as Luis was saying on Friday, until they find the poor themselves. Because the oxen get injured and die, the wife leaves the husband, and the land, cannot bear fruit too many times. Then they find themselves at the crossroads of life, being compelled by the angel to come, until the heart of the Father is fully healed, because he can embrace all of us. We need only remember, again and again, that we are invited. Let us all come together: ***“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”***

Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together:” (Psalm 122)

“The Lord does not speak to us merely as those who receive. He speaks to us as His servants, sent out into the streets and lanes, the highways and the hedges, to gather those who have never eaten, never known true fellowship, and never heard His voice. ... That is the logic of the Gospel. Those who taste abundance first are not meant to keep it for themselves. Good news demands to be shared. A feast discovered becomes a feast proclaimed. The invitation is real. The door is open. But it is not enough that we enter alone. We are sent to bring others with us.”

(from Subdeacon Arsenio sermon)

Community reflection on Thursday gospel this week -

"Look at the fig tree, and all the trees; as soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near."

Luke 21:28-33

In today's Gospel, in Christ's parable about the promise of good fruits brought forth from budding leaves, we hear Jesus assuring of the Promise of The Kingdom of Heaven, which we must be ever ready for, and in our dark nights we pass through, grasping for hope, that this Hope, bestowed upon us by Christ giving up His Life for us is ever awaiting us in this earthly life, a Hope that will sustain us while still here, a Hope that even here, we may nurture our fig trees.

The budding of our own leaves is faith, and the heeding of The Word of God, a life lived in Holiness, and in the Peace and Trust in the Promise of the Kingdom to come, and learning to Love our neighbour, to forgive, to care for those who have nothing... Although often we encounter people who have so little, who have faced a lifetime of pain and struggles, still have a very pure hearted trust in Christ's Gift of Hope...they weep, however, they also laugh, sing...The leaves on the trees of these people, seem to appear to us even on bitterly cold days like today, where many of them have had no shelter the night before, have already sprung forth from smiling eyes, tearful repenting confessions, rest, coffee and food they are grateful for.

The joyfully decorated Evergreens filling the mission now in preparation for the Nativity are just that, Evergreen, in every season. So as we ought to strive to be.

Green, and putting forth Good Fruit, every moment of our lives.

We need not wait for our last day on earth to experience the delight of the Kingdom of God, we can experience shining moments of The Kingdom of God in our everyday lives if we only let the eyes of our hearts notice these gifts of Grace.

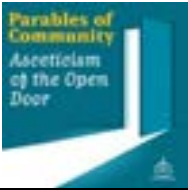
Fruit trees need light and water to thrive, to bear forth fruit. Let us ever share this Light, and this Fruit for the one whom has laid down beneath, seeking cooling shade on one of this city's brutally hot days it is difficult to remember on a cold day like today.

As evergreens do, our trees of Faith and Love, we too can grow and thrive, the icy winds will not knock us over if we Love and Trust in Christ's infinite mercy.

Let us ever multiply our orchards and share in the bounty of what we give.

As though we are offering it to Christ himself, as the Gospel tells us.

By Elisha



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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

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