



“The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom”

Freddie said on Friday that the parable reminded him of the two brothers, the prodigal son and the older brother. In a way, they look the same, Freddie thought. The prodigal son, just like poor Lazarus, finds communion, while the older brother and the rich man talk and argue with the Father or with Abraham today. The resemblance touches also on their condition, Freddie thought. Poor Lazarus experiences a similar condition like the prodigal son after he spends his fortune: he is alone and destitute, in the company not of men but rather animals. The older brother and the rich man live a life of protection and certain comfort. We remembered on Friday that all three gospels during lent speak about two people, including here the Publican and the Pharisee. And we can see, in a way, these similarities in all three of them. Br Luke told us on Friday that the gospel today speaks about two solitudes. In a way, both the rich man and Lazarus are presented as being alone in the parable. Even though the rich man’s family is mentioned. But this is somehow marginal. The rich man does find himself alone in hades.

Another question that came on Friday was if the suffering of the rich man is eternal. A volunteer felt for him. His suffering is different than that of Lazarus, who only suffered temporarily, while the rich man seems to suffer forever. Is that fair? And we asked ourselves if hell is eternal. Is it?

The first Sunday of Lent revealed an encounter between Christ and Nathaniel, between man and God, when the face of Christ was revealed to Nathaniel when he was under the fig tree. We look for the face of God during lent and in our own life. We look for the light that shines in the darkness. If we find the face, hell is not eternal anymore. Because according to the gospels, hell is the place where we turn our back to the poor man, to the one that is excluded and marginalized, to the one that prays for mercy. Communion takes us out from our hell. Is it eternal? As much as our rejection is. We must learn to embrace and to welcome, to come out of ourselves and see the face of God who has become man. The church is teaching us the path to communion with those who are powerless, and whom we exclude today from our own life. The older brother, the Pharisee and the rich man live this relationship with the other from a high place. Our brother has been humbled, he has been humiliated by our rejection, by his sins, by his condition because his flesh is eaten up by illness and does not smell good. Hell is the exalted position from which we behold our brother, rejecting him through ignorance while we know well who he is. We know the details about his life, that he is a sinner, a tax collector, that he is our

brother who left us to work alone with the father. We know even his name. However, in all three gospels, it is him who finds communion with God, the one who lived an utter rejection and humiliation in this life.

God could not leave him alone, because he is his child. After he dies, he is never left alone. He is carried by angels in the bosom of Abraham. He is adopted into eternal life. In the parable of the prodigal son, he receives a ring on his finger. A sign of betrothal with God. Their love for each other is sealed and bears a visible sign. It is a sign of communion that does not exclude but is welcoming and inviting for all. The Father is pleading with the older one.

Is hell eternal? If we continue not to talk directly to the younger brother, to the poor, to the sinner. But rather talk about them in our mind or even when we try to pray...

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise." (today's gospel - Mark 10:32-45)

As we approach Holy Week, the gospel reminds us that the one who comes in humility, from a low place, is Christ. He is rejected, mocked and unclothed. Our understanding is enlightened when we see the hell that rejects communion. We understand better our own heart. Somehow, the rich man in the parable today has the intuition that Lazarus is partaking already in the resurrection, because he asks him to go to his brothers. Abraham does not contradict him. He just reminds him that the resurrection does not take us from hell if we reject communion with the poor man, with the sinner and with our brother who harmed us. Christ brings resurrection upon us through the cross. It is His death, the death of the unblemished one that brings about forgiveness. Lazarus loves the poor man and does not despise him for having ignored him and made him feel invisible all his life. The rich man knows that, which is why he asks Abraham for Lazarus to do certain things for him. Because he knew that Lazarus loved him by the gate and he continued to love him while he was in hell. The love of Lazarus remained the same, even though one could see that their condition had changed radically.

What brings communion in a broken society and wounded city, what takes us out of the hell of our ego and personal sins is the love of the poor. And their forgiveness. Because they are able to forgive and bless while being cursed. Because they do not remember those who harmed them with condemnation within their heart. But they always have their face turn towards reconciliation. It is true that they have many wounds. Physical, spiritual and psychological. And at times it is hard to approach them and speak to them. To get them to share their name. And because of these infirmities and ignorance they hastened unto death (psalm 14). But somehow,

in a paradoxical way they learned to open up to communion while being destitute. When we say and believe that Christ is the poor man, we don't say it only because he lives himself the utter destitution but also because the poor forgive as He forgives after the resurrection. At times, at the mission, we taste the love of the poor. And it is sweet because it is true and genuine. It bears within itself the sign of the cross. And even though the wounds are not healed, forgiveness is what opens their heart and makes possible reconciliation with us and each other because they know that the bosom of the Father is waiting for them. We can see this belief in their eyes and on their faces. We can see it in the embrace of the angels that cover their faces when they come to carry them. This is the gate of heaven. Because Christ has passed through it.

It felt as though the bread distributed during the play by Warren came from Christ himself. It was Christ giving himself to all of us through the people who participated in the play. A taste of communion in a creative, simple and loving way. We wonder at times how we can bring people together in one place, from church, from the breakfast program, from people with disabilities, from Scarborough and Eco market, from the neighbourhood, from overseas and from very close. The play that Br Luke put together with the people did just that, with a genuine and natural desire of all to partake of it. It felt and it was like heaven.

The church, visible and invisible, is grateful to br Luke for giving us, together with the people, a sign that hell, after all, might just not be eternal.

So help us God!



The sorrowful embrace of the poor man that brings us close to the gate of the resurrection. The living communion and the holy water that the rich man desires in heaven. There is plenty of it on earth. Warren and Maddison are pictured in the Easter play.

We continue our reflection of the Patriarch Bartolomeo letter to the mission of January 2026

"...On this joyful anniversary ,we extend to you, to the staff and volunteers, and all whom you embrace in your benevolent outreach, our wholehearted congratulations and paternal exhortation to continue courageously in this holy work. May your witness remain a beacon of hope , a refuge of charity , and a living proclamation of the Gospel's inexhaustible mercy...."

One thing that is striking about the letter is that it's more an exhortation than a letter of congratulations. Exhortation to live what?

It is an exhortation to continue to LIVE our LIFE as a witness of the Gospel's hope ,charity and mercy towards humanity. He calls the work of the mission a HOLY WORK. He challenges us to go deeper into the life that the mission has been living for the last 40 years and to embrace others in it.

And you brother and sister, fellow orthodox Christian who read this, if you have not yet started, why not begin today and talk to father Nicolaie about how you can participate in this HOLY WORK!

pRoberto

Community saying:

About espresso, Thursday and Friday afternoon: "this taste is bitter and sour ... it is bad, but I like it ... it reminds me of the hardships of life, just like that, bitter and sour ... and it makes me desire to live more. To do more good. Too many candies and sweets, when you eat them all the time, they make you feel heavy and not want to move, to do things. Like paralyzing you. The sorrows make you light and want to do good things. I like the taste of espresso at the mission.

(Roma, this Thursday, while having a cup of mission espresso coffee)

Statement of Activity
St. John the Compassionate Mission
January 1-December 31, 2025

	Total
4009 MISSION CHURCH INCOMES	
4006 Candle collections	1,862.35
4007 Mission Church Other Incomes	7,530.43
4008 Mission Church Donations	25,985.52
Total for 4009 MISSION CHURCH INCOMES	\$35,378.30
6001 MISSION CHURCH EXPENSES	538.54
6002 Liturgical supplies	2,347.15
6004 Candles	2,778.87
6005 Other Mission Church Expenses	18,337.36
Total for 6001 MISSION CHURCH EXPENSES	\$24,001.92

Accrual Basis Thursday, March 26, 2026 06:55 PM GMTZ



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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, March 29, 2026

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