



The Blind Man John 9:1-38

"It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him.

Antiphon 1. Mode pl. 1.

"In my affliction, like David, I sing to You, my Savior. Deliver my soul from a deceitful tongue.

Blessed is the life of those who dwell in the desert, as they mount up with wings of the intense love of God.

By the Holy Spirit are all things maintained, both seen and unseen; for He is inseparably one of the Trinity with full authority.

The silence of God within the innocent soul gives life to a longing that is growing. An anticipation for a new creation. A new life. For the hand who blesses with peace, to work again, from clay, a new man. The unspoken desire to see the completion and beauty of new creation is perfected within the heart who suffers hidden away from the eyes of many. Out of the innocent suffering, the works of mercy are touching humanity in us. The endurance and patience of the one who suffers out of innocence gives birth to a new love, that waits for the Bridegroom without seeing him before, like in a dream, yet believing in his coming. Because the touching of the mercy has happened already within the heart. Before the morning star, from the mother's womb, the one who could not see, heard clearly: You are mine ... And hearing, he believed. And believing, he worshiped Him.

In the healing of the blind man we see the blessing of the poor, who receive a place to lay their head, the multiplication of bread and fish for those who are hungry; the smile of those whose tears have cleansed their eyes by day and by night; the adoption into sonship of the orphans and of those who are rebuked. They are prepared to bear witness, to become a sign. Like the virgin, to bear the Truth and give birth to a beautiful witness. They are chosen to become the one who is greeted with "Christ is risen!"

The blind man was waiting within the silence of God, in darkness. Waiting to proclaim and witness his love for Christ. But people would not speak to him. And would not listen to him. His heart was full of mercy he could not share. Because what he could not see, he heard within his heart. The voice that sings a song, when the affliction of abandonment would surround his soul, made a pledge to him. A poem of love, faithfulness and truth. The blind man would sing this song about the coming of the Bridegroom for many. Because what the innocents learned within their heart was going to be shared with the sinners too. But people rushing through life would not take time to listen to his voice. Thinking that since he could not see, he could not sing either. That he would not have a voice. That he is born in sin and there is no God for him. No lover and no friend. What could a sinner sing to us about? What could his story be, except one of sorrow and condemnation? A story where even his parents would delimitate from him, because of fear of being perceived in the same way.

And yet, even though he cannot see, and he will not be heard, there is a gaze into the portico, the light of the world. The eyes that have been crying to see his face. The room is not empty, although the breeze

of “evening” comforts his heart with a unique embrace, like the breaking of dawn, early in the morning, whom he could not see but rather feel the warmth on his face. Jesus is walking into the portico like God within the garden calling for Adam. Only that the blind man does not hide because he cannot see. He waits in plain sight, because he learned what it means to be avoided. He has nothing to hide. Only a song that people do not want to hear. A song he could not share.

Jesus restores his sight and his voice. He gives him freedom. To see and to confess. To become a witness and a stumbling block to lies. The one who is alone, becomes a friend to the Son of man. He is not indifferent anymore because he bears within his body the touch of mercy. He cannot be avoided. He is the top of the spear on which people hurt themselves when stepping on it. People look for him, to find a blemish, to come up with a lie, that God does not care. But they could not find one.

It is within the life of those who suffer for the sake of the touching of mercy that God works within humanity a new creation. They are worked upon first, at the beginning and at the end. The gospel is for us today the answer to the question “How long?” ... For the sickness that does not heal, for the suffering that does not ease, in the life of people we can see, and we know. Both innocents and sinners. Because God loves us all. How long? We have been listening to lies and been fooled by them. There is a witness today about the Truth. And it comes from the life of those who have endured with patience. Those who were not seen, because they were broken hearted, and today they are revealed fulfilled. Those who were silenced by indifference and contempt, today could not be ignored anymore, because truth is spoken through them. The blind man came out of indifference only to find himself alone at the end, excluded from community. Outcast from the temple. Laid aside. He received his sight just to see that he was left alone. Even his parents could not stand by him anymore. The sign of new creation starts with man being alone. With God, whom he now sees face to face and worships Him.



P.S.

Today’s reflection was helped by John, who is blind. As he was going into the van at the end of the day on Wednesday, an older refugee from Iran was looking at him with respect, love and fear. He said this might be the worse illness one could have. One could spare a hand or a leg, but to have no eyes, the man said he could not imagine living with that darkness.

During the day, John is always ready to talk to anybody who listens to his voice. Even though he confessed this week that people don’t ask him how he is, how his life is. If they talk, they ask more about his mom, who is still in the hospital.

And yet he smiles, and he talks with kindness, even though people are not directly interested in his life. His patience in his sight deficiency gives birth to his smile and his kind hospitality that welcomes all.

Community life

Three women came on the same day. Like old Samaria, Toronto is waiting for the encounter and for the living waters.

We do see more homeless women coming to the mission lately, more than before. New and old faces, whom we have known for a while. Some of them bear within the body, mind and soul a type of distress and suffering that challenges the community to welcome and embrace them. “No easy life...”, as some would say. On Wednesday, three homeless women visited the mission at different times during the day and somehow their visit involved clothing as well.

Firstly, T. came in the morning, after a few months’ break. She came to say hello and to look for a rain jacket. She was cold, and rain was coming. She did not want shoes; she didn’t want to replace her flip flops. Eventually she accepted a pair of socks, together with the jacket and some pants. She wanted to buy her socks from Dollarama, because she does not want to take too much from the mission, knowing there are other people in bigger need than her. She didn’t want to stay too long either, because she didn’t want to keep us from tending to other people’s needs as well.

At the end of lunch J. came in. You never know what to expect when she visits us. This time she ate, and she was quiet and able to speak about her life briefly. And at one point, as if she realized she was in church, she changed her clothes, partly in the washroom and partly in the room. She confessed she came to the mission for the church, even though at times she might mistake us for something else. As she left, she carried away her bags, together with the unspoken promise that she would return. We’ll be waiting for her, never knowing what to expect from her visits.

Then came C., who is rather new in the community. She asked about prayer and, during lunch, she shared a few things about her mother, whom she had cared for until her death a couple of years before. She was all alone after that. She is young and childish in a way. She asked for prayer time and she promised she would come back in the afternoon. “I’ll come, and I’ll put on a new dress for church”. Many people expressed the desire to return for prayer, and yet, she was one of the few who followed through. And she came, not wearing a dress, but with new clothes, prepared for church. She prayed, she received a blessing and she stayed for dinner.



St. Silouan Chapel at St. John the Compassionate Mission
155 Broadview Ave. Toronto, ON M4M 2E9
416-466-1357 • info@stjohnsmmission.org • stjohnsmmission.org



St. Zoticos Orthodox Church at Good Neighbours Mission
193 Markham Rd Scarborough, ON M1J 3C3
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

©2026 St. John the Compassionate Mission