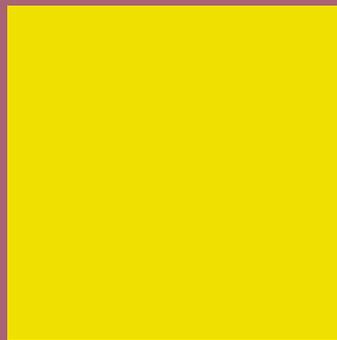


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ENCOUNTER WITH THE OTHER:  
DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

## MODULE ONE

# DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE VIDEO



Figure 1.1  
Video Clip

The story takes place on a remote Greek island, where Yiorgos, a school student, lives with his family. On the island there is a large refugee camp, and the locals react to it in various ways, at least suspiciously. Yiorgos, however, has established friendly relations with many of the youngsters that live in the camp. Suddenly, Yiorgos' grandfather has a heart attack and urgently needs blood. Who will respond to the family's needs and become a blood donor? Will it be their relatives and their local friends or maybe the foreigners, whom Yiorgos' family confronts as a threat?

## 1.2 VIDEO SCREENING

### 1.2.1 COMPREHENSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Based on the video you watched, try to answer the following questions.

1. *What kind of relationship does Yiorgos' father want his son to have with the refugees?*
  - a. A friendly relationship
  - b. No relationship at all
  - c. He does not care if his son has any relations with the refugees
  - d. I do not know / No answer
  
2. *Who mobilized to donate blood for Yiorgos' grandfather?*
  - a. His compatriots and fellow believers
  - b. Lena, Sotiris, Yiorgos' father and two friends of theirs who had diabetes
  - c. Refugees of a different nationality and a different religion
  - d. I do not know / No answer
  
3. *In the parable mentioned by the grandfather, who is it who comes to the aid of the wounded man?*
  - a. The Samaritan who was considered his enemy
  - b. The Priest who was his compatriot
  - c. The Levite who was his compatriot
  - d. I do not know / No answer

4. *The words of Gregory of Nazianzus that “all people have a divine seal and that all of us, in the love of Christ, become as one” are mentioned in the video. What do they mean?*
- a. We are all one in the love of Christ, regardless of ethnic origin, religious belief or social class.
  - b. We are all one in the love of Christ, as long as we share the same religion
  - c. We are all one in the love of Christ, as long as we have a common ethnic origin and religion
  - d. I do not know / No answer
5. *At the end of the story we watched, whose perceptions were changed in relation to foreigners?*
- a. The father’s
  - b. The grandfather’s
  - c. None of them
  - d. I do not know / No answer

### **1.2.2 TOPICS FOR RESEARCH**

The video we watched presents the topic: “Encounter with the other”. The main issues and questions we will need to address are:

- a. Whom do we consider to be our neighbor and whom do we consider to be “the other”?
- b. Why do we often regard “the other” fearfully and feel threatened by him/her?
- c. What answers does the New Testament give us to the above questions?
- d. What practices and attitudes can we draw from the Orthodox tradition and apply in our daily life?

## 1.3 US AND THEM

### 1.3.1 QUESTIONS

1. In relation to the story you watched, consider the characters and write down which of them you consider “yours”, i.e. close to you?

2. In addition to the people close to us, there are also other people around us, who are different from us and whom we often fear and treat with hostility. Can you give some examples?

### 1.3.1 OBSERVING AROUND US



Most people usually call “neighbors” their blood relatives, compatriots and fellow believers, local people and friends, with whom we share the same feelings, the same ideas, the same views and in general our daily life. As they have a common language with us, a common religion, a common homeland, we feel they are similar to us, we communicate with them easily and that is why we do not think of them as a threat and we are not afraid of them. On the contrary, we regard as “other” every person who is different from us, who is possibly a foreigner, who does not speak our language, who does not have the same religion, the same homeland and the same culture as us. “Others” differ from us in their ideas and opinions and so communicating with them is difficult and requires a lot of effort. Often, we feel they are a threat to us and we regard them with suspicion and fear. Thus we maintain a distance and are unable to achieve unity and harmonious coexistence with them.

## 1.4 THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament, Christ gives us the criteria and shows us the way to coexist harmoniously with all human beings, regardless of any differences, with love for every human being, even towards the enemy, overcoming fears and insecurities. Let's read Jesus words, written down by St Luke.

### 1.4.1. THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN (LK. 10:25-37)

<sup>25</sup> Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus.[a] "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" <sup>27</sup> He answered, "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." <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." <sup>29</sup> But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead." <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii,[b] gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" <sup>37</sup> He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."



Figure 1.2  
The Good Samaritan by  
Aimé Morot (1880)  
Source: Marc Baronnet  
via Wikimedia Commons:  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7901316>

**1.4.2 WHAT I NEED  
TO KNOW IN ORDER  
TO UNDERSTAND THE  
PARABLE OF THE GOOD  
SAMARITAN**

**Parables:** Jesus usually taught in parables. About one third of His teaching is parables. These are short stories He Himself created, whose subject matter comes from the daily life of the Israelites, revealing, in a vivid way, the truths of the Kingdom of God. Jesus taught in parables because this was the usual way of teaching among all his compatriot rabbis, and because it was **an illustrative way of teaching that everyone could understand**. The parables invite the listener to recognize his own self somewhere in the plot of the story, to wake up, to reflect and to take a personal stance. Jesus' parables were justifiably described as an "illustrated gospel".

**Neighbor:** In the times of Christ, the Israelites considered parents, brothers, relatives, friends, neighbors, fellow believers and compatriots as "neighbors", people close to them. On the other hand,, the enemies of their homeland, especially the Romans, foreigners, the followers of different religions and particularly the Samaritans were considered as "other".

**Priests:** These were the descendants of Aaron, who was the brother of Moses. Priests **served in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem** during the daily ceremonies. Their main duty was the offering of sacrifices and prayers to liberate the faithful from their sins and from evil forces. In the times of Jesus the priests are estimated to have been about a few thousand. In Jerusalem alone there were over 1000 priests and 250 Levites.

**Levites:** These were the descendants of Levi and **assistants of the priests**. Their duties were to guard and to keep the Temple of Solomon tidy and clean. Both the priests and the Levites knew the divine commandments very well and would have been obliged to take care of the wounded Jew, who was in any case, their compatriot.

**Samaritans:** Members of an ethno-religious group composed of Israelites who had intermarried with Babylonians, Syrians etc. **Their religion had the same roots as Judaism**, but with serious deviations from the Jewish tradition. Because of this, the Israelites considered them schismatic and not compatriots. Their religious center was the temple on Mount Gerizim, which was located above the city of Shechem. In the time of Christ, **the gap between them and the Israelites was vast; the two groups hated each other deeply** and for this reason the Israelites avoided any communication with them.

**Denarius:** (plural Denarii): A silver coin of the Roman Empire, circulating in the time of Christ. On one side it had the image of the emperor Tiberius and on the other the image of his mother Livia. The two dinars that the Samaritan gave to the innkeeper were equal to two daily wages of an unskilled labourer.

**1.4.3 MAP OF  
PALESTINE IN THE TIME  
OF CHRIST**



Figure 1.3  
Iudea Province in the  
First Century,  
Source: Andrew c via  
Wikimedia Commons.  
Licenced under the  
Creative Commons  
[Attribution 3.0 Unported](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)  
license. The map has  
not been changed and  
can be found at [https://  
commons.wikimedia.org/  
wiki/File:First\\_century\\_  
ludaea\\_province.gif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:First_century_ludaea_province.gif)

### 1.4.4 EXERCISE

The following works of art depict various scenes from the parable of the Good Samaritan. Observe the works carefully and place them in the correct order according to the narrative of the parable. Can you identify the characters from the parable in these works?

Figure 1.4

Source: Wikimedia  
Commons: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f1/Rembrandt\\_Harmensz.\\_van\\_Rijn\\_033.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f1/Rembrandt_Harmensz._van_Rijn_033.jpg)



Rembrandt, *The Good Samaritan*



Figure 1.5

Source: Wikimedia  
Commons: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paula\\_Modersohn-Becker\\_005.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paula_Modersohn-Becker_005.jpg)



Paula Modersohn-Becker, *The merciful Samaritan*



Figure 1.6

Source: Wikimedia  
Commons: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vincent\\_Willem\\_van\\_Gogh\\_022-2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vincent_Willem_van_Gogh_022-2.jpg)



Vincent Van Gogh, *The Good Samaritan*



**1.4.5 DELVING DEEPER INTO THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN:**

To obtain a deeper understanding of the Parable we will investigate what love means to the Samaritan, we will identify similarities between characters in the video and those in the Parable and finally we will focus on the central point of the Parable in order to address its basic question.

**Exercise 1**

In the biblical text the verbs that express the attitude of the Samaritan towards the wounded Jew are:

came – saw – was moved – approached – bandaged – poured – put on – brought – took care – gave – come back – repay

Use as many of these verbs as you can to describe what love means to the Samaritan.

**Exercise 2**

Place the persons of the parable and the persons of the story of the video in the corresponding squares according to their position or behavior.

	Person in need	Who is considered "neighbor"	Who is considered "other" (stranger or enemy)
Parable of Good Samaritan			
Story in the Video			

### Exercise 3

After telling the parable, in reply to the original question of the lawyer, “who is my neighbor?”, Jesus replies with another question “which of these, do you think, behaved as a neighbor?” What does Jesus want us to understand, with this question, about our attitude toward the other?



## 1.5 SO FAR WE HAVE UNDERSTOOD...

**... that I am not a “neighbor” by default, but I become a “neighbor” to the other through love and solidarity; by accepting responsibility for the other.**

In order to confront the concept of the “foreigner”, we must begin by acknowledging that the Gospel is a scandal. I remind you that, at one point, where Christ gave the definition of “neighbor” [...] **He indicated as the “neighbor” the most distant person (a person of a different race and a different religion) [...]** Which means that, for the definition of the “neighbor” and the “stranger”, the Gospel does not share the criteria of the old world, i.e. common blood [origin], common language and common religion [...] These features, of course, are the building blocks of a nation or a race. But they are not the criteria of the Church. And in fact, if we pay attention to the text of the Gospel, we will see (and I repeat) that **Christ does not say who “is” the neighbor and the enemy, but who “becomes” the neighbor and the enemy.** Both “become”, not according to their origin, but through their actions: through **solidarity** or the denial of love, accordingly.

(Th. N. Papathanassiou, *The Rupture with Zero. Shots of political theology*, Athens: Armos, 2015, pp. 152 -153)

**... that love knows no limits**

Jesus’ question radically reverses the question posed by the lawyer, “who is my neighbor?” While the latter referred to the object of love (i.e. who should be considered as a neighbor), Jesus speaks of the subject of love (i.e. who behaved as a neighbor). The lawyer posed the problem of his epoch, regarding the extent of the concept of the neighbor and therefore of the limits of love, while Jesus, in telling the parable, showed that **there are no limits to the concept of the neighbor, nor any restrictions to the commandment to love.** If every human being feels as a subject of love, then he cannot set limits to this love; his love extends to all, because the limits of the neighbor are boundless. Whoever loves only his friends, his fellow believers, his own in general, behaves as a human. But whoever is not confined by such barriers, behaves divinely, following the model of the God of love as revealed in the person of Jesus, who tells the parable.

(Ioannis D. Karavidopoulos. *Biblical Studies*, Thessaloniki: Pournaras, 1995, p. 335)

## 1.6 THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE “OTHER” IN THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN TRADITION

The same guidelines given to us by Christ, governing our attitude to our neighbor and to “the other”, and shaping a new way of life, are found in texts of the Orthodox Christian tradition.

In the following texts the criteria of the Orthodox Christian tradition governing our relationship with each other are made clear. These are:

**a) Human nature and human needs are common to us all, and that is why there is no place for discrimination.**

**b) Love for God presupposes love for every human being**

### Exercise 1

Discover in the following texts the phrases that correspond to the above criteria and underline them.

### Texts

If someone who is struggling to meet their needs knocks on your door, do not weigh things in an uneven way. In other words, do not say “He is a friend, he is of the same race, he has benefited me in the past, while the other is a stranger, a foreigner, a person I don’t know.” If you judge unequally, you too will receive no mercy [...] Human nature is common; both neighbor and stranger are human; needs are common to both, and so is poverty. Offer to your brother as well as to the stranger; do not turn your back on your brother, and make the stranger into your brother too. God wants you to support the needy, and not to discriminate between people; he does not want you to give to the person of your kin and neglect the stranger; all people are of the same kin, all of them are brothers, all of them are children of one father.

(Basil the Great\*, Fourth oration on Charity)

If we detect any trace of hatred in our hearts against any man whatsoever for committing any fault, we are utterly estranged from love for God, since love for God absolutely precludes us from hating any man. He who loves Me, says the Lord, will keep My commandments (cf. John 14: 13, 23); and “this is My commandment, that you love one another” (John 13: 12). Thus he who does not love his neighbor fails to keep the commandment, and so cannot love the Lord. Blessed is he who can love ail men equally. He who loves God will certainly love his neighbor as well.

(Maximus the Confessor\*, Four hundred texts on love 15 – 17, 23)

## Exercise 2

According to the words of Gregory of Nazianzus which we heard in the video, “all people have a divine seal and in the love of Christ we all become one. Also, all discrimination belongs to the old world, the one we Christians leave behind.”

Answer individually or work in small groups:

What would you change in your life in order to leave behind what St. Gregory calls the “old world”?

## Exercise 3

Imagine that the grandfather in the video story, while recovering in hospital, dictates a message for the social media to his grandson, in which he thanks the people who saved his life. What do you think he would write in his message?

## 1.7 FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

After our discussions in class, attempt to answer the following questions. Compare your final answers with your original ones.

1. *What kind of relationship does Yiorgos' father want his son to have with the refugees?*
  - a. Friendly relationship
  - b. No relationship at all
  - c. He does not care if his son has relations with the refugees
  - d. I do not know / No answer
  
2. *Who mobilized to donate blood to Yiorgos' grandfather?*
  - a. His compatriots and fellow believers
  - b. Lena, Sotiris, Yiorgos' father and two friends of theirs who had diabetes
  - c. Refugees of a different nationality and different religion
  - d. I do not know / No answer
  
3. *In the parable mentioned by the grandfather, who is it who comes to the aid of the wounded man?*
  - a. The Samaritan who was considered his enemy
  - b. The Priest who was his compatriot
  - c. The Levite who was his compatriot
  - d. I do not know / No answer

4. *The words of Gregory of Nazianzus that "all people have a divine seal and that all of us, in the love of Christ, become as one" are mentioned in the video. What do they mean?*
- a. We are all one in the love of Christ, regardless of ethnic origin, religious belief or social class.
  - b. We are all one in the love of Christ, as long as we share the same religion
  - c. We are all one in the love of Christ, as long as we have a common ethnic origin and religion
  - d. I do not know / No answer
5. *The words of Gregory of Nazianzus that "all people have a divine seal and that all of us, in the love of Christ, become as one" are mentioned in the video. What do they mean?*
- a. The father's
  - b. The grandfather's
  - c. None of them
  - d. *I do not know / No answer*

## 1.8 ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS: MATERIAL FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION



Figure 1.7  
Rossano Gospels Good Samaritan cut  
Source: Wikimedia Commons: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:RossanoGospelsFolio007vGoodSamaritan.jpg>

### My grandmother Rousa

We were hungry and wanted to eat right away. Immediately, without delay. We had stood up and were celebrating by shouting and laughing, when suddenly my grandmother came back in. We froze. She was holding two frightened children by the hand. Smiling and full of kindness, she gestured to us to sit down. The children were crying and couldn't say a word. "Sit all together", she said. "Tonight we have two more friends: Ahmet and Fatme. We will all eat together and tell stories. Ahmet and Fatme live in Gurculadika. Today they came to Kozani\* and have not eaten all day." Isaac and Clio, Greek refugees from Asia Minor\*, descendants of the Ionians\*. Fatme and Ahmet from Portorazi, children of the antichrists. And the rest of us, locals from Kozani\*. At the same table. We were totally stupefied, eyes wide open. The refugees were trembling, the Turks were trembling, and we were trembling too. We sat down, not so much because our grandmother told us to, but mainly because our knees were shaking. And, despite our hunger, it was impossible to start eating. She had managed to make us sit at the same table. The uprooted from their ancient homelands, the enemies from the nation who had oppressed us for four hundred years, and us, yesterday's slaves and today's masters.

(M. Papakonstantinou, *My grandmother Rousa*, Athens: Estia, 1997, pp.38-39)

**The following excerpt is from an interview of the Ecumenical Patriarch\* Bartholomew, commenting on the Papal Encyclical “Fratelli tutti”.**

Question: On what basis can we all consider ourselves brothers and why is it important to discover ourselves as such for the good of humanity?

Answer: The Christians of the very early Church called each other “brothers.” This spiritual and Christian brotherhood is deeper than the physical kinship. However, for Christians, brothers are not just the members of the Church, but all people. The Word of God took on human nature which unites everything by itself. As all human beings are created by God, everything is incorporated into the plan of salvation. The love of the believer has no limits and barriers. In fact, it embraces the creation as a whole, it is “the flame of the heart for all creation” (Isaac the Syrian). Love for brothers is always incomparable. It is not an abstract feeling of sympathy for humanity, which usually ignores the neighbor. The dimension of personal communion and brotherhood distinguishes Christian love and brotherhood from abstract humanism.

(The Ecumenical Patriarch\* Bartholomew, “Abandon indifference and cynicism”, interview commenting the Papal Encyclical Fratelli tutti, 23.10.2020)

## 1.9 GLOSSARY

Clarification of theological terminology, and also information on the historic personalities and places found in the book.

**Asia Minor:** The peninsula of Anatolia in present-day Turkey. It was a crossroads of cultures and a meeting point of migratory tribes moving from east to west and vice versa. Hellenism flourished there from about 1200 BCE until the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922 and the expulsion of Greek Christians.

**Basil the Great:** One of the great Fathers of the Christian Church and one of the Three Hierarchs. He was born in 330 in Caesarea, Cappadocia in Asia Minor. He studied rhetoric, philosophy, astronomy, geometry, medicine, and physics in Athens. He lived as an ascetic in the desert of Pontus for five years until he was proclaimed Bishop of Caesarea. As a bishop he founded a number of institutions for the care of the poor and the sick. Throughout his short life he fought for the unity of the Christian Church. His works are divided into dogmatic, anti-heretic, ascetic, practical, orations and letters. He died on January 1, 379 at the age of 49 and was buried with great honors. His memory is celebrated on January 1 by the Orthodox Church and on January 2 by Catholics.

**Blood brother:** One who becomes a brotherly friend through the process of fraternization. In this way individuals or groups of persons who are unrelated by blood are ritually united in fraternal ties, and promise mutual love and protection. This custom was fairly widespread in the Eastern Mediterranean.

**Diabetes:** A chronic disease characterized by a constant high blood sugar level.

**Ecumenical Patriarch:** In the Orthodox Church, the Patriarch of Constantinople is called Ecumenical Patriarch. The title Ecumenical (“Universalis”) was formerly attributed also to the Pope of Rome, but quickly became the exclusive title of the Archbishop and Patriarch of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman State (Byzantine Empire). The Ecumenical Patriarch is the first among equals (“primus inter pares”) of all the Bishops of the Orthodox Church and presides over the Synod of Bishops.

**Gregory of Nazianzus:** Otherwise known as Gregory the Theologian. He is considered to be an important personage of the Church and one of the Three Hierarchs. He was born in 329 in Arianus, near Nazianzus in Cappadocia. He was ordained a Bishop and proclaimed Ecumenical Patriarch. His rich literary work is divided into orations, letters and poems. He died on January 25, 390, at the age of 61. His memory is celebrated in East and West on January 25.

**Inn:** A type of hostel in olden times; a shop that offered, for a fee, accommodation and food for travellers and their animals.

**Ionians:** The Ionians were one of the four ancient Greek tribes and were settled mainly in Attica, the Aegean islands and Asia Minor, in the region called Ionia.

According to mythology, the Ionians and the rest of the Greek tribes were descendants of Deucalion and Pyrrha whose son, Hellen was considered the progenitor of the Greek (Hellenic) tribes. From the name Ionia, the Turks named the Greeks “Yunan” and Greece “Yunanistan” since the Ionians were the first tribe they met when they came to the area.

**Jericho:** A city in Judea, 27 km to the North East of Jerusalem. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem passed through desert in many places with several precipices and steep cliffs. Robbers frequently found refuge in such places and used them as their strongholds. Pilgrims travelling from Galilee to Jerusalem in order to celebrate Pesach, often made a final stop in Jericho.

**Kozani:** A city in Western Macedonia in Northern Greece which flourished in the 18th century. Kozani still has many mansions dating from that time, which form a tourist attraction.

**Maximus the Confessor:** Was born in Constantinople in 580 and received a remarkable philosophical and theological education. He was a high-ranking government executive and later became a monk. As a monk, he was a central figure in the opposition to the heresies of his time. He was exiled and tortured for his views by a group of heretics but nevertheless he confessed (remained faithful to) Orthodoxy. He died in 662. The Church commemorates him on January 21.

**Olive oil:** This well-known product of olive pressing was a staple food of the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, due to its beneficial ingredients, it facilitates the faster healing of wounds, keeping them soft and moist and preventing pain. Hippocrates, Greek physician of the 4th century BCE, in his work "On ulcers" recommends "gauze folded in two and moistened with wine, with clean wool soaked in olive oil on top" for the treatment of wounds.

**Wine:** A product in daily use in the time of Christ by the peoples of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. In addition to its consumption for enjoyment, it was also used for sterilization and purification, due to its alcohol content.

# 1.10 TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

Characters

Yiorgos

Maria: Yiorgos' Mother

Apostolos: Yiorgos' Father

Grandpa: grandfather of Yiorgos and father of Apostolos

Doctor

Refugee kids

## SCENE 1

On a well-known island near the Greek border, the family we have already met is experiencing the hardships caused by the presence of hundreds of refugees in the local community, who have arrived there and live in makeshift camps. The son of the family, thirteen-year-old Yiorgos, is sitting at a table and doing his homework. His father is watching the TV news in the living room. His mother is preparing the food. The door between the two rooms is open. We see Yiorgos in the foreground while in the background his father is watching the TV.

*FATHER: (almost shouting) Hey, look what's going on here! Over and over, boats with refugees and immigrants landing on our island. Where will it all end? Can't they go anywhere else? Soon we won't hear the Greek language in our streets.*

*MOTHER: Calm down, Apostolos, Yiorgos is reading.*

*FATHER: What are you saying, Maria? Can't you see we have a very serious problem with all these foreigners? They are different from us, we have nothing in common. As for Yiorgos, I know that he has made friends with kids from the refugee camp. Time to put an end to this, lad, do you hear me?*

*YIORGOS: (Listening, but maintaining a guilty silence. He whispers faintly) Yes, dad.*

The phone rings and interrupts the talk. The mother picks up the handset, and it becomes obvious that she is frightened by what is being said to her. Yiorgos listens anxiously to what his parents are talking about.

*MOTHER: Apostolos, come here. Something happened to your father. He is in the hospital.*

*FATHER: (talking to the phone) Yes, I understand. We'll be right there... we'll do whatever we can.*

*MOTHER: (With obvious anxiety) What happened?*

*FATHER: My father had a heart attack. He needs surgery immediately and they need us to give blood for the operation. Let's go to the hospital.*

*MOTHER: Yiorgos, we are leaving for the hospital. Stay here. Ah, God help us...*

## SCENE 2

Yiorgos is at home alone. His phone rings. On the screen of the mobile, his friends from the refugee camp, two boys and a girl, appear, looking happy..

*KIDS: Hey, where are you Yiorgos? What happened? Aren't you coming today?*

*YIORGOS: (obviously sad) Sorry guys, I can't come. My grandfather had a heart attack and needs to have an operation. It must be serious, because I heard that the doctors asked us to find blood for the surgery. I'm very scared, guys. (He bursts into tears)*

## SCENE 3

Some hours later, Father and Mother head to the hospital's blood donation department. They are talking to each other.

*MOTHER: What do you mean "you told everybody and only two people came"?*

*FATHER: I called everyone and said that we need blood, but only Sotiris and Lena finally came.*

MOTHER: *And the rest?*

FATHER: *The others couldn't.*

MOTHER: *So, two units of blood from them and two from us, four. And how many do we need?*

FATHER: *At least eight. Maybe ten.*

MOTHER: *Dear God, what shall we do?*

They reach the blood donation department and they see a long queue of refugees waiting.

FATHER: *Look at that, it's terrible. They come here in their thousands and they fill our hospitals too.*

*Entering the department*

FATHER: *We came to give blood for my father.*

DOCTOR: *Don't worry, Mr Apostolos. There are already fifty units of blood available for your father.*

FATHER: *Are you kidding us, doctor? Where did fifty donors come from?*

DOCTOR: *I don't know where they came from, but there they are, waiting patiently to give blood for your father.*

The doctor points to the waiting refugees and Apostolos is left speechless, his eyes wide open in surprise.

#### **SCENE 4**

Some days later. In the hospital room, Yiorgos' grandfather is recovering after the operation. Standing next to him is Yiorgos' father, Yiorgos' Mother and his grandson, Yiorgos. The two men talk to each other.

FATHER: *Thank God, father, everything went well.*

GRANDFATHER: *Yes, son. I already feel better. What I do not understand, however, is how all those strangers came to donate blood for me.*

FATHER: *It is really strange, but I will find out. Anyway, I think they should have asked us if we wanted to receive blood from those people.*

GRANDFATHER: *If it weren't for those people, we may not be here talking right now. I don't know why, but since yesterday, when I learned about the blood, the Parable of the Good Samaritan has stuck in my mind. Do you remember? A Jew is robbed and beaten, and while he is laying there bleeding, a Jewish priest passes by, but he pays no attention. Then a Jewish Levite passes, and also ignores him. At last, a Samaritan comes along, a man from a community the Jews used to hate, and he takes pity on the victim. He cleans his wounds and takes him to an inn for better care. You see? A man considered to be an enemy helps him, while his fellow patriots and believers pass him by. It makes me wonder, who is the friend and who the enemy? Who is "the neighbor", as the Gospel says?*

FATHER: *It seems to me that you were afraid that you would die and you turned to religion. But I wonder, is the blood they gave you safe? Those people are full of diseases.*

GRANDFATHER: *We are afraid of our shadow these days, Apostolos! These people have been here for over a year now. They are our fellow humans and have become our fellow citizens. And they certainly showed it in my case, don't you think?*

FATHER: *I don't recognize you, father. Didn't we say that all these people are a threat and that they should go back where they came from?*

GRANDFATHER: *Let's give it a rest. We have been wrong for so many years. Now we have got to know them in our common homeland: humanity and love.*

Yiorgos' father and mother leave. Yiorgos stays on the ward to keep his grandfather company.

Fade in. Grandpa is reading a book in the hospital bed (maybe the Bible) and Yiorgos is sitting next to him.

YIORGOS: *Grandpa, can I ask you something?*

GRANDFATHER: Yes, of course; go ahead.

YIORGOS: What does "blood brothers" mean?

GRANDFATHER: "Blood brothers" are those who have united their blood.

YIORGOS: Their blood? Yuk!

GRANDFATHER: Yes, and so, even though they are not born of the same parents, they treat each other as if they were real brothers.

YIORGOS: And how do they unite their blood?

GRANDFATHER: They slit the skin of their hands with a knife and join their wounds. This is how their blood is mixed and this is something that unites them forever. Nice idea, huh?

(short silence)

YIORGOS: Does that mean, grandpa, that now that you have the blood of the refugees in you, that you are blood brother with them?

YIORGOS: Does that mean, grandpa, that now that you have the blood of the refugees in you, that you are blood brother with them?

GRANDFATHER: (with a surprised smile) Hmm, I hadn't thought of that, but hmm... well...I suppose you could say so... actually, why not? (One more moment of silence, Grandpa and Yiorgos look at each other) You know something, my lad? Some time ago, I flipped through your school book on religion and I read something by St. Gregory the Theologian. He said that all people have a divine seal and that all of us, in the love of Christ, become as one. He also said that all discrimination belongs to the old world, the one Christians have left behind. When I read it, I did not like it at all. I closed the book, and I was a bit angry. I could not imagine how deeply I was bound with this old world ...

YIORGOS: You know what I'm thinking, grandpa? After what happened, it's a good thing that I asked you and not dad, what it means to be "blood brothers". I'm afraid dad would call me names.

GRANDFATHER: (laughing) I think you're right. Your dad needs some more time to be able to answer such questions soberly. Let's give him time, shall we?, What do you say?

YIORGOS: (laughing playfully) Yes... of course... Let's wait for him to grow up first ...

The scene closes with grandfather and grandson laughing like kids.

## 1.11 REFERENCES

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