



# WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



## 20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE A

Fr. David Rosenberg

visit us at <http://HopeCrossingMinistries.com/>

*"O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." Matt 15:28*

The most important point of today's gospel about the Canaanite woman is that her faith crashes through every possible human barrier erected that might otherwise exclude people from God's saving love. As Jesus exclaimed, *"O woman, great is your faith!"* Only Believe and we will be saved.

As in the other readings today, we see the theme of *"the universal call to holiness"* developed in striking ways *"Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Matthew 5:48). Here another point is made: Inclusion requires both a deep-seated desire and recognition of our need to be included. Jesus is portrayed by Matthew as reluctant to grant the woman's request to heal her daughter. A test of her faith is clearly laid out: Her first entreaty is met with silence on the part of Jesus. It is met with something even harsher by the disciples, who look upon her persistence as a nuisance.

How does Jesus respond to the disciples' request to send her away? At this point in Jesus' ministry, His mission was to fulfill prophecy, *"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* But this is a turning point and an important message of the gospel, the breaking through of the insuppressible mercy of Jesus Christ. The woman's daughter was healed from that hour.

This gospel reminds us that Jesus Christ, Son of God in His Trinitarian reality, breathes life into every soul on earth. All are welcome into the mystical body of His Church. Great is his glory for pardoning and healing the multitude of persons, lost and otherwise abandoned as strangers. We are called to extend that heart of mercy, imbued within us at the moment of our baptism. We are the living Body of Christ, carrying the Word that gives light to a world in darkness.

As the deacon prays as he pours water into wine at the Offertory of the Mass, *"By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity."* In other words, at our baptism, we enter into a binding incarnate relationship with Christ and the Trinity. In the great gift we are given of sharing in His divinity, we push on beyond our small Community to the world we are called to walk, as Jesus walked.

This week, it is good to reflect and pray that, through the Holy Spirit, we be brought to a perfection in our hearts the spirit of adoption as brothers and sisters of Christ, sons and daughters of God our Father. As we contemplate the mysteries of the merciful Sacred Heart of Jesus, may we enjoy the fruits of the Mystical Body of Christ, and draw others *"with human chords and bands of love, fostering them like one who raises an infant to his cheeks."* (Hosea 11:4) Through our ministry, may all come to know that Christ is their healer.

**A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew**

At that time, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.  
And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out,  
"Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David!  
My daughter is tormented by a demon."  
But Jesus did not say a word in answer to her.  
Jesus' disciples came and asked him,  
"Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us."

He said in reply,  
*"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

But the woman came and did Jesus homage, saying, "Lord, help me."

He said in reply,  
*"It is not right to take the food of the children  
and throw it to the dogs."*

She said, "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps  
that fall from the table of their masters."

Then Jesus said to her in reply,  
*"O woman, great is your faith!  
Let it be done for you as you wish."*

And the woman's daughter was healed from that hour.

***The Gospel of the Lord***