

August 16, 2020

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 56:1, 6-7

Rom 11:13-15, 29-32

Mt 15:21-28

GROW: Talk about chutzpah! For the Canaanite woman, it took courage and audacity to persist after first the disciples, and then, by all appearances, Jesus, tried to turn her away. As a pagan woman, she was clearly an outsider. Yet she didn't let these obstacles stop her from seeking the Lord's help. Jesus recognized her great faith and healed her daughter. Her boldness can be a model for us. Has prayer become routine or even an after-thought amid the activities that pull us in so many directions? Do we feel our concerns are too petty or insignificant? Do we wonder whether God really cares about us? At times like this, we can take our cue from this Canaanite woman of faith and echo her words: "Lord, help me." Jesus hears us.

GO: I have to admit that grace before meals is sometimes a rushed affair at our house. "Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which *we are about to receive* has been known to turn into ... *we are receiving.*" And at Mass, after the lector has done a beautiful job sharing the universal prayers, I think to myself, was I fully listening? Yes, it's true, the Lord knows our needs and knows what is in our hearts. But next time we say grace, let's think about how truly blessed we are to have bountiful food on our table, and next time we say: "Lord, hear our prayer" during the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass, let's remember the Canaanite woman and pray with more passion and boldness – and most of all, with more faith.

STUDY: When describing the power of faith, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* singles out an unlikely example. It's not Peter, Paul or the early disciples, but the Canaanite woman, an outsider in her time. "Jesus is as saddened by the 'lack of faith' of his own neighbors and the 'little faith' of his own disciples as he is struck with admiration at the great faith of the Roman centurion and the Canaanite woman." (2610) For a refresher on what "great faith" looks like, read sections 2609-11 in the *catechism*. You'll find some gems and inspiration there!