



20th Sunday Ord. Time Yr A

Lectio Divina

Lectio: Our text comes after Jesus walked on the water of Lake Galilee (or Tiberius) and then, with the disciples, landed at the shore at Gennesaret. There he got into discussion with the religious authorities about their rules and traditions that made them ritually clean and separated them from all non-Jews. Jesus challenges them: 'it is not what goes into a person that makes them unclean but rather what comes out of them'. So he goes from there to the region of Tyre and Sidon on the coast (an entrenched pagan area, south of present day Beirut). Did he want to take a break at the beach? There, at the extremity of Jewish territory, he was away from extreme Judaism which had lost sight of compassion. The Jews had come to consider that they were the children of God whereas pagans were no more than dogs. Jesus was no doubt exasperated by the Jews' misunderstandings and lack of faith in him. This also conflicted with his role to present the Good News (of compassion) to the Jews*. So Jesus is confronted by a local woman with no Jewish pretensions but has faith in Jesus. At the heart of the Good News is that it is faith and compassion that the Lord wants not the following of rules and traditions. Jesus cures the woman's daughter not the save embarrassment but because of her faith even though it is beyond his role.

After this (detour) Jesus returns to the Lake of Galilee where the second miracle of the loaves occurs. After more misunderstanding by the religious authorities and lack of faith from the disciples, next Sunday's text is in Caesarea Philippi, i.e. inland from Tyre & Sidon.

(*The way God works with his people is through the Word of God. The Jews had the Word of God. However, the Holy Spirit will work in many other ways for those who do not have access to the Word of God. People without the Word of God were classed as pagans by the Jews. In this sense, Jesus' role was first to the Jews. N.B. "Jews" = Jews of Jesus' times.)

Read: **Matthew 15: 21 - 28**

Meditatio: Have I sometimes got away from a challenging situation? Have I ever thought that I am better than others? Have I felt out of my depth or out of place? How have I reacted when someone has pestered me? Have I done things just to avoid embarrassment? Have I resisted helping others even when they say: "Help me."? Has the Lord not helped me when I asked for help? Have my requests of the Lord been made from selfish or inappropriate motives? How persistent am I in prayer? Can I wait till the time is right for the Lord's response? Have I accepted the Lord's response to my prayers even when it was not what I thought I wanted? Do I put people down i.e. have I, in any way, treated people as less than me (as dogs)? Have I treated people differently because of where they come from? Do I waste food? Am I generous or stingy? Have I great faith? Do I plead for those in need, those sick physically or mentally, those oppressed, the helpless etc.? Have I given thanks when my prayers were answered?

Oratio: Pray for greater faith. Pray for trust in the power of prayer. Pray that the dignity of every person will be respected. Pray for those who are victims or perpetrators of racism. Pray that no one will be denied the help that they need? Pray for peacemakers and those who strive for justice for all. Pray for a true option for the poor. Pray for those who do not have knowledge of the Word of God. Pray for those with mental illness. Pray for those with epilepsy. Pray for a proper distribution of the world's food resources. Pray for the downtrodden and the poor. Pray for the coming of God's kingdom. Pray for mothers.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer — Pray for a timely resolution of the Pandemic.

✍ Fr Joe

Matthew 15: 21 – 28

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, 'Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' But he answered her not a word.

And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give her what she wants,' they said 'because she is shouting after us.' He said in reply, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.'

But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said 'help me.' He replied, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs.' She retorted, 'Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master's table.'

Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.