

# **Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home**

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 16, 2020

God's love crosses all boundaries

At the border, on the frontier, at the margin, on the fringe, at the dividing line, on the brink, at the DMZ (demilitarized zone) – these are the artificial barriers, the human-made demarcations where change is needed and change can happen. And that's just where our readings go this weekend.

All three of today's readings call us to move beyond our preconceptions and prejudices. Isaiah says that if Israel is true to her vocation, unexpected people will come and even minister in the temple. Paul grapples with the grace of the Gospel's unexpected attractiveness to pagans and its rejection by God's people. And Jesus ventures across the border into Gentile territory where he learns that when his vision needs broadening, God will send the most unexpected, even disrespected teachers.

Today's Gospel depicts Jesus on his way toward the border between Jewish and pagan territory. As he moves one way, a Canaanite woman is coming from her side of the line toward Jewish land. Where they meet is the crux of the story.

In terms of cultural boundaries, the woman is the one who leads in crossing over. When she appeals to Jesus for help, she first refers to him as Lord, addressing him like a disciple. Then she astutely calls him "Son of David," a Jewish title perfectly designed to further her cause. As a kingly son of David, he was responsible for the care of widows, orphans and foreigners. This woman and her daughter might have qualified on all three counts: There is no mention of her husband and she is surely an outsider to Judaism.

In spite of all of that, Jesus exhibited a decidedly un-Christlike attitude and refused to acknowledge that she had a claim on him. He simply ignored her! What more could the woman have done? Jesus was the exorcist par excellence, the vanquisher of demons, and yet, he wasn't even tempted to accept this woman's plea to free her daughter

from torment. When the disciples suggested that he dismiss her, he still refused to acknowledge her presence and replied to them that he was sent to the lost sheep of Israel.

But a reluctant healer is no match for a desperate mother. Matthew depicts how she moved from the sidelines to put herself directly in Jesus' path. Even if she had to force him to trip over her, she was going to command his attention. Instead of begging for mercy, she asks for his help. Her request for mercy was a plea for empathy, an imitation of Israel's prayer, which asks God to be emotionally involved in the plight of the one praying. In asking for help, she's moved out of the realm of appealing to sympathy; she only asks for action: "No matter why you do it, please, just do it!"

Jesus replies with the explanation that his mission is directed to his own people, their enemies count no more than dogs, in this case "puppies". Read literally, Jesus has gone from ignoring to insulting her, which is actually an advance. He now recognizes her and treats her the same way he had just treated the Pharisees he had called hypocrites. She immediately seizes the opening he let slip. She says "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters (verse 27)."

Her retort might as well be as direct as saying, "They don't pay attention to you, you don't pay attention to me. Why not give to those who desire what you offer? I don't mind the left-overs, and from what I can see, you've got more than enough waiting for the taking!"

With that she got his full attention. He must have laughed — perhaps even at himself as she shook him out of his reluctance and inhibitions. He had been paying attention to boundaries, to nationalities and religious restrictions, while she concentrated her whole being on the plight of her child. She hounded him into remembering the bigger picture.

In the end, she got him. She got not only his help, but his admiration: "O woman, great is your faith!" Her recognition of his power went beyond the barriers of ethnicity and religion. She had started out with the vocabulary of Jewish faith, and she backed it up with belief so insistent that he too came to believe that he could help her.

It's a little surprising that Matthew and Mark preserved a story that shows Jesus in such a poor light (Luke and John didn't include it at all). Then again, we could admit that it shows Jesus as capable of growing and changing his perspective. This incident must have been a thorough shock to the disciples. This woman who had no right to make a claim on Jesus actually got him to reconsider his position, to accept an alternative viewpoint, and to do something he had not been prepared to do. He was being just as open as he demanded that others be! This story adds credence to his Gethsemane prayer and the summary in Luke 2:52 about Jesus' growth in wisdom that show him to be a real human being who matured and learned, who wanted to accept God's will even when it contradicted his own assumptions, preferences or desires.

We can't ignore the fact that in the four Gospels the only times we see Jesus obviously change his mind come in response to requests by women: from this woman (Mark 7:24-30 & Matthew 15:21-28) and from his mother during the wedding celebration at Cana (John 2:1 ff). Then there is the case of the woman who "pick-pocketed" her miracle (Matthew 9:21). Unclean as she was, she snuck up behind Jesus and reached out toward him with hopeful faith to touch the hem of his garment. Not only was she healed, but Jesus ended up calling her "Daughter," the only woman he ever addressed with that term.

We might also note that the only three people Jesus is reported to have raised from the dead include a little girl in Matthew 9, the son of a widow (Luke 7:11-17) and the brother of Martha and Mary (John 11:1-44). In each case, Jesus seemed to be unusually moved by the needs of women, working his greatest signs on their behalf and/or responding to them in ways that seemed unplanned. Perhaps the Gospel writers recorded this one because it showed just how true Jesus was to his option for the marginalized — even to the point of allowing women to teach him.

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20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Prelude:** Sing along with James Cleveland and the Mighty Clouds of Joy in “Plenty Good Room”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKym5i8qmB8>

**Leader:** In the name of the Father, † and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Assembly:** *Amen*

**Leader:** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and  
the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**All:** And with your spirit.

**PENITENTIAL ACT**

Lord Jesus, you were approached for healing by an outsider:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you had compassion on her, despite your hesitation:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you call us to have compassion despite our hesitations:

Lord, have mercy.

**Opening Prayer**

God of the nations,

to your table all are invited

and in your family no one is a stranger.

Satisfy the hunger of those gathered in this house of prayer, and

mercifully extend to all the peoples on earth

the joy of salvation and faith.

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God forever and ever.

**20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A Readings**  
**August 16 2020**

**1st Reading – Isaiah 56:1, 6-7**

<sup>1</sup> Thus says the LORD: Observe what is right, do what is just; for my salvation is about to come, my justice, about to be revealed.

<sup>6</sup> The foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, ministering to him, loving the name of the LORD, and becoming his servants all who keep the Sabbath free from profanation and hold to my covenant,

<sup>7</sup> them I will bring to my holy mountain and make joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

**Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8**

**R. O God, let all the nations praise you!**

<sup>2</sup> May God have pity on us and bless us;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
may he let his face shine upon us.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> So may your way be known upon earth;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
among all nations, your salvation.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>

**R. O God, let all the nations praise you!**

<sup>5</sup> May the nations be glad and exult;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
because you rule the peoples in equity;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
the nations on the earth you guide.<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>

**R. O God, let all the nations praise you!**

<sup>6</sup> May the peoples praise you, O God;<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
may all the peoples praise you!<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>

<sup>8</sup> May God bless us,<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>  
and may all the ends of the earth fear him!<sup>[L] [SEP]</sup>

**R. O God, let all the nations praise you!**

**2nd Reading – Romans 11:13-15, 29-32**

Brothers and sisters:<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub><sup>13</sup> I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I glory in my ministry<sup>14</sup> in order to make my race jealous and thus save some of them.<sup>15</sup> For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?<sup>29</sup> For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.<sup>30</sup> Just as you once disobeyed God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience,<sup>31</sup> so they have now disobeyed in order that, by virtue of the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy.<sup>32</sup> For God delivered all to disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

### **Alleluia – Matthew 4:23**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

<sup>23</sup> Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> and cured every disease among the people.

<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>**R. Alleluia,**

### **Gospel – Matthew 15:21-28**

<sup>21</sup> At that time, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

<sup>22</sup> 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.”

<sup>23</sup> 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.”

<sup>24</sup> He said in reply, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

<sup>25</sup> But the woman came and did Jesus homage, saying, “Lord, help me.”

<sup>26</sup> He said in reply, “It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.”

<sup>27</sup> She said, “Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.”

<sup>28</sup> 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.....Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

## Reflection Prompts:

Before you begin, sing along as Deborah Joy Winans leads “If I Could Help Somebody” from the “Greenleaf” soundtrack:

<http://filmmusicreporter.com/2020/08/11/greenleaf-season-5-soundtrack-ep-released/>

Our first reading from “Trito” (Third) Isaiah, God calls us to “Observe what is right, do what is just...” (Isaiah 56:1). That rings a bell. Sunday after Sunday we respond at the beginning of Eucharistic Prayer “It is right and just” when the presider says “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.” These two one syllable words have profound meanings that link us to God’s loving purpose.

Technically, being *just* is essentially a matter of observing the commandments. Not blind or grudging obedience, not fear of getting caught obedience. The Hebrew sense of obedience is appreciative rather than legalistic. Obedience is a response to God’s loving outreach. One obeys the commandments because they come from God’s love, because they are a way to live in that love. Being “just” is obedience to a relationship of love.

The word *right* in this reading has the same root as the word translated as *salvation* in the next line:

“for my salvation is about to come,  
my justice, about to be revealed.”

It has to do with deliverance, with making things become as they should be. Speaking of God, it refers to faithfulness and mercy. Righteousness might be conceived of as the ongoing activity that keeps the covenant alive and growing. Thus, the opening part of today’s reading is a call to live in faithfulness to the covenant, both in the sense of obeying the commandments, and in active efforts to make the world what God intended it to be.

1. How can you be an agent of deliverance? How can you make things as they should be, right and just?
2. Isaiah sings of a House of Prayer for All People. Have you had taken part in interfaith dialogue with non-Christian believers? How was the experience?

3. How did Jesus' interaction with the Canaanite woman strike you? For whom would you have to stretch to have an inclusive encounter? What group or category of people would expand your concept of the Beloved Community?

### **Mediation Prompt:**

Spend a moment praying

- for the grace to act with inclusive love, from which no one is excluded, or
  - for the wisdom to know how best to advocate for women, children or those most vulnerable, or
  - for the courage to stand firm and speak truth respectfully, even when insulted or ignored.
- . Then move into this week's intercessions.

### GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – August 16, 2020 TWENTIETH SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

**Presider:** My friends, God calls for us to live with each other in peace, and to pray for one another.

### **Worship Leader**

1. For the Church, that we may be a people open to all and rejecting none. We pray: **Heal us, O God.** (ASSEMBLY RESPONDS: **Heal us, O God.**)
2. For believers of every nation, of every race, who worship in every language, and who call God by different names. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
3. For all those committed to interfaith dialogue and interfaith justice coalitions, that they persist in seeking understanding and change. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
4. For the people of Lebanon and Belarus who yearn for fair elections and an end to political corruption. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**



5. For a wider spread adoption of masking, hand-washing and other public health precautions, so that the pandemic will dwindle. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
6. For an end to the Death Penalty and Human Trafficking, especially in Georgia. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
7. For political leaders to act for the Common Good to prevent evictions and hunger that looms for many citizens who are out of work in this recession. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
8. For our Stephen Ministry, its leaders, and all Care Team members and receivers here at Lourdes. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
9. For clearer guidance and planning for our schools and colleges as they begin the new academic terms, that the health and welfare of students, teachers and support staff and their families be of paramount value in this time of pandemic. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
11. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Lynn M. Johnson and Father Ken Westray for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
12. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**

**Presider:** God of all lands and all humanity, hear the prayers of your people this day and unite our prayers to those of believers everywhere in a House of Prayer for All Peoples. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!

Then sing or recite The Lord's Prayer.

Lean back and listen to Patti LaBelle and Deborah Joy Winans sing “Changed” from Greenleaf, Season 3.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYhSi05NPeQ>

### **Closing Prayer:**

For those who love you, God,  
you have prepared blessings which no eye has seen;  
fill our hearts with longing for you, so that,  
loving you in all things and above all things,  
we may obtain your promises, which exceed every heart’s desire.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and  
reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.  
Let the Church say.....AMEN!

### **Closing Hymn**

Sing along with Deborah Joy Winans and the ensemble from the  
Season 5 finale of “Greenleaf” the anthem, “What A Mighty God We  
Serve.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6IIWKSFU0c>