



**AMDG**  
**20TH SUNDAY IN**  
**ORDINARY TIME**  
**YEAR A**  
**20TH AUGUST 2017**



**Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
Let all the peoples praise you**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

O God, who have prepared for those who love you  
good things which no eye can see,  
fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love,  
so that, loving you in all things and above all things,  
we may attain your promises  
which surpass every human desire.

The readings this week highlight that the gift of faith in God is for everyone. God's blessings are not confined to one group or nation. We are all called to share in the love and mercy of God. The First Reading speaks of the foreigners who will receive the same joy and acceptance as God gave to his chosen people, the Jews. St Paul (Second Reading) in writing to the Romans takes this one step further. He hopes that the gifts God has given to the Romans will encourage his own people, the Jews, to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, because God's mercy is for everyone. The Gospel speaks of Jesus's encounter with a woman he would not have expected to speak to him. She comes to him pleading great need. Jesus's initial response may surprise us, but he is won over by her persistent faith and grants her request. We pray with the Psalm, asking that God will be gracious and bless us, guiding all the nations on earth, so that God's ways may be known and all people receive his saving help. "May God still give us his blessing, till the ends of the earth revere Him."

## FIRST READING: ISAIAH 56: 1, 6-7

Thus says the Lord: Have a care for justice, act with integrity, for soon my salvation will come and my integrity be manifest. Foreigners who have attached themselves to the Lord to serve him, and to love his name and be his servants – all who observe the Sabbath, not profaning it, and cling to my covenant – these I will bring to my holy mountain. I will make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their holocausts and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.

After coming to stillness in the presence of God, I read this text from the prophet Isaiah slowly, allowing its words and phrases to linger in my mind and heart.

I notice the words that have meaning for me, and allow myself time to let them resonate. God is speaking to me through his Word today.

How do I want to respond?

I ponder the values highlighted here: justice, integrity, service, love, prayer. I give thanks for the times in my life where the Lord has enabled me to live by his values. I speak with him about how he is calling me to live them now. I listen ...

The Lord promises to make us joyful, to bless the sacrifices we make in following his Way. What is bringing me joy in my life?

I give thanks!

How might I share the justice, integrity and joy of God with others?

I end my prayer in stillness, or speaking to the Lord from my heart. Glory be ...

## GOSPEL: 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 the 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.

As I begin my prayer today, I take my time to become still before the Lord in whatever way is best for me.

When I am ready, I read the Gospel slowly, maybe several times. Then, setting the text to one side, I picture the scene, watching events unfold, or perhaps accompanying one of the characters in the story:

Jesus seeking rest; the woman shouting her need for help; the curious bystanders watching; the disciples embarrassed and wanting quiet; the woman persisting in her asking ...

Listening to the dialogue between Jesus and the disciples, and Jesus and the woman, I notice what I am feeling and thinking.

What do I want to say to the woman? And to Jesus?

I know that I can speak freely with the Lord, just as I am.

I too come to kneel at Jesus’s feet. What is my deepest need today?

I ask Jesus. I listen for what my Lord might say to me.

I end my prayer slowly, perhaps asking for the faith and confidence to trust God for all my needs. Our Father ...

## Here's a text if you've only got a minute...

Have a care for justice, act with integrity, for soon my salvation will come and my integrity be manifest. *First Reading*

God never takes back his gifts or revokes his choice.  
*Second Reading*

O God, be gracious and bless us and let your face shed its light upon us. *Psalm*

*This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:*

*Isaiah 56: 1, 6-7; Psalm 66; Romans 11:13-15, 29-32;*

*Matthew 15: 21-28*

“WOMAN, YOU HAVE  
GREAT FAITH ...”

AND FROM THAT  
MOMENT HER  
DAUGHTER WAS  
WELL AGAIN.



How does this image help me meditate on these readings?



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