

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time-A: A Table with Room for Everyone: Is 56:1, 6-7; Rom 11:13-15, 29-32; Mt 15:21-28

We live in a world that often builds walls. We decide who belongs and who does not. We divide people into “us” and “them.” We welcome some and keep others at a distance. But today, the Word of God tears down those walls.

Imagine a large family table. There is bread, there is a cup, and there are many places around it. But one person is standing outside, and someone says, “This place is not for you.” Then Jesus opens the door. The Kingdom of God is not a private room for a privileged few. It is a table where grace makes strangers into family.

Isaiah tells us: **“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”** God’s house is not a private club. All are invited to come to God. And this challenges us. God does not begin by asking, “Where were you born? What is your background? What culture do you belong to?” He looks at the **heart**. The Church cannot become a closed circle. The doors of the Church are meant to open toward the world. But Isaiah also reminds us that faith must become a way of life. He says, **“Observe what is right; do what is just.”** Our faith is not merely something we say. Faith becomes something we do.

Our prayer inside the church must become charity outside the church. What we receive at the altar must shape how we treat people at home. Our Sunday faith must enter our Monday work. Our devotion must enter our relationships. A tree is known not only by its leaves but by its fruit. In the same way, our faith must produce kindness, justice, forgiveness, generosity and love.

The Psalm gives us the beautiful prayer: **“O God, let all the nations praise You!”** God blesses us not only to fill our hands, but to open our hands. We receive God’s goodness so that we can become instruments of His goodness.

Then Paul tells us, **“The gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.”** What a message of hope! Human beings may wander. We may fall. We may make mistakes. Someone we love may even walk away from God. But God does not easily abandon the person He has called. Perhaps you have failed. Perhaps you have wandered. Perhaps you think your story is finished. **Do not write the final chapter yourself. God may still be writing.**

Where human beings see failure, God can create a new beginning. Where we see broken pieces, God can create a beautiful mosaic. God does not approve our sin, but He can redeem our brokenness. He can bring light from darkness and new life from failure. Therefore, as Christians, we never have the right to say, **“There is no hope.”** The Cross itself proves otherwise. Where human beings saw death, God brought resurrection.

In the Gospel, A Canaanite woman approaches Jesus. She is a foreigner and an outsider. But she is also a mother whose daughter is suffering. She cries out, **“Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David!”** Notice something beautiful: she does not come to Jesus for herself. She comes because someone she loves, is suffering. Her daughter’s pain becomes her prayer. This is intercessory prayer. We carry another person’s name before Jesus. We bring another person’s wounds into His presence. Perhaps there is someone in your life who

needs your prayer today. Someone who cannot pray for himself or herself. Someone who is struggling, suffering, or far from God. **Carry that person to Jesus.** But then something very difficult happens. Jesus is silent. The woman cries out, but there is no immediate answer. Many of us understand that experience. We pray. We wait. We ask again. And sometimes heaven seems silent.

But the Canaanite woman teaches us something very important: **Silence does not mean absence.** Jesus is silent, but He is not absent. Sometimes faith must walk through the corridor of silence before it reaches the room of blessing. So, when your prayers seem unanswered, do not abandon prayer. Keep knocking. Keep trusting. Let waiting itself become an act of faith. The disciples then say, **“Send her away.”** Another door seems to be closing. But she does not go home. She comes closer to Jesus and says simply, **“Lord, help me.”** What a prayer! Sometimes that is all we need. She does not claim entitlement. She does not say, “I deserve this.” She simply throws herself upon mercy.

Then Jesus speaks about the children’s bread and the dogs. These words are difficult for us to hear. But the woman responds with extraordinary humility and trust: **“Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.”** She takes the very image Jesus gives her and turns it into an expression of faith. She knows her need, but she also knows the greatness of Jesus. **Even the crumbs are enough for someone who knows the greatness of the Master.** And then Jesus says the words she has been waiting for: **“O woman, great is your faith!”** What is great faith? Great faith is not faith that never struggles. It is faith that **keeps praying.** It is faith that keeps trusting through silence. It is faith that keeps knocking after rejection. It is faith that remains humble when the answer is delayed. It is faith that refuses to surrender Christ.

Great faith is not the absence of obstacles; it is the refusal to stop seeking Jesus. The woman began as an outsider. She encountered silence. She encountered rejection. She responded with humility and perseverance. And finally, the person others wanted to send away became the person Jesus held up as an example. What a lesson for the Church! Sometimes the person we think has nothing to teach us becomes the person through whom God teaches us the faith we most need. The woman came from outside Israel, but mercy brought her inside.

Isaiah had already seen this day: **“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”** The Church is not saved merely to belong. **We are saved to welcome. We are saved to witness. We are saved to become instruments of mercy.** Perhaps Christ is asking us to build a bridge where we have built a wall. Perhaps there is someone who needs a welcome. Perhaps someone needs our forgiveness. Perhaps someone needs our prayer. Perhaps someone simply needs us to say, **“You have a place here.”** And when we come to this Eucharistic table, let us remember: **we cannot receive Christ while deliberately rejecting His children.** The Eucharist teaches us that communion with Christ must become communion with one another. Christ opens His door to us so that we may become doors of welcome for others.

May we keep praying when heaven seems silent. May we keep trusting when the road becomes difficult. May we open our hearts to those who feel like outsiders. May we build bridges where others have built walls. May the Eucharistic table teach us to make room for one another. And may our faith become mercy, and our mercy become welcome. **Keep knocking at Christ’s door— and keep opening your door to others.** Amen