

Rectoría San Juan de Dios  
XX Sunday of Ordinary Time-Cycle A  
Is 56, 6-7; Ps 67; Rm 11, 13-15.29-32; Mt 15, 21-28  
Fr Dante Gabriel Jiménez Muñoz Ledo

Let Us Go Further

Two thousand years ago, Jesus broke down the limits that man tries to put on God. When we hear Jesus refer to that Canaanite woman as a dog, we have to understand the cultural context in which Jesus is speaking. He is showing his disciples and the rest of His followers that they are living under a reductive conception of God. They believe that they have exclusive rights to God and Jesus because they are the Chosen People. Jesus used a popular saying to exaggerate the situation and used it as a timely teaching for everyone. *“It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.”* (v 26)

The disciples ask Him to deal with the woman, to send her away because she is bothering them. They are sure that Jesus will send her away. Jesus delays giving them His attention until they are at the limit of their tolerance and the Canaanite woman is at the limit of her need and her petition.

In this Gospel, everyone has had to go further. Jesus goes beyond the Jewish territory, to Tyre and Sidon, the land of the pagans. The disciples have to go beyond their reductive or closed vision of God. And the Canaanite woman goes beyond what is permitted to a pagan.

If we want to go further, following the teaching of Jesus, let us try these ideas:

### 1-Let us go beyond our rights.

To discover that others have rights equal to mine is a good start. Isaiah, in the first reading, writes in the voice of God, “*Watch over the rights of others, practice justice.*” This is a core principle of humanity and civility. At times it costs us a lot to think of the other person and to act considering others! But God wants to save all who join themselves to Him, even the foreigner or someone who thinks differently.

In the Gospel, we can discover that Jesus wants to educate his disciples in universality so that they accept those who make them uncomfortable or those who are different. He wants to eliminate the inequalities, not the differences, to eliminate racism and discrimination. How universal are we?

### 2-Let us go beyond suffering.

St Paul suffers because he is not succeeding in saving those of his own race, and he fights against their rebellion. Jesus is not insensitive to the pain of the Canaanite woman. He only wants to help her to believe in the faith. She knows the Jewish tradition and for that reason has cried out, “Son of David.” She accepts the privileged position of Israel and considers herself inferior to the Jews. Even so, she dares to call out to Jesus. She also goes further in her suffering. That her daughter is *terribly tormented by a demon* is her greatest suffering. And she is asking for something that does not come from man, but only comes from God. If Jesus is who He says He is, she wants Him *to have compassion on her*. She is affirming that compassion is above the discrimination of peoples.

### 3-Let us go further in our mission.

It seems that at times we are so limited in our outlook that we have closed our minds, and we fall into discrimination and racism. We should understand that we are

not unique, that our concerns are not the most important things in the world, and that what the world most needs from each of us is that we do our part to accomplish a greater mission.

Jesus broadens the outlook of his disciples; he lets them know that beyond the baptized who are lost and who must be recovered, there are the different, the inconvenient. That beyond any ideology or religion, they must practice justice and watch over others.

The Canaanite woman served perfectly for the pedagogical intention of Jesus. Faced with the exclusionary saying that says not to take the bread of the children and throw it to the dogs, she answers quickly with a unique response, irrefutable: *"Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from their masters' table."* In a word, the Canaanite woman has said to Jesus: if God is truly present here and now, in His mercy, have compassion on me.

Let us hope that if we dare to go further, we find that what many are looking for is not our salvation, but the salvation of God, through us.