

**TWENTIETH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**  
**August 20, 2023**

**Gospel: (Matthew 15: 21-28)**

A Canaanite woman called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon."...Jesus said, "*I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" But the woman came and did Jesus homage, saying, "Lord, help me." He said, "*It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.*" She said, "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters." 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.

**Reflection:**

What is the deeper significance of these apparently harsh words of Jesus? The answer lies in Jesus' clear understanding of his mission, to the house of Israel. This woman was not a Jew, and she is thus challenging Jesus to extend his mission beyond Israel to include all people. This foreign woman gives us a model response to Jesus in her confident prayer and great faith. Thus the Gospel announces that the kingdom and salvation are for all people. It is our persistent calling out to Jesus and our faith that count for Jesus always responds. (Living Liturgy, p. 220)

**Vincentian Meditation:**

Vincent reminded the women in one of his charitable organizations, that it is Divine Providence that calls Christians to be creative in forming communities of service. He told them, "It has been 800 years now since women have had any public role in the Church. In early times there were deaconesses...but this custom stopped and your sex was deprived of providing all these kinds of services. In our day, however, this same Providence prompted you to take up the crucial work of caring for the poor...God has given you as mothers to the abandon children...and call upon you to dispense many alms. By the grace of God, these good women have responded to these needs with great warmth and steadiness." (McKenna, Praying with Vincent, p. 103-4)

**Discussion:** (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

**How have women been a grace to the Society? What gifts and services have they brought to your Conference?**

**Closing Prayer:**

O God, as you call us to serve the poor may we  
-also be evangelized by those we serve.  
Grant us the grace to be open to the gifts of women in the Church,  
-may our words and actions bear witness to Jesus.  
Give us the faith and courage of the Canaanite woman,  
-so that we may be true servants of the gospel.  
**Amen.**

Woman,  
great is  
your  
faith.

Mat 15:28

