

## **20<sup>th</sup> Sun A... Persistence**

### **Introduction**

Today's Gospel tells us a wonderful story of a persistent woman who has faith.

What can we learn from this story?

### **The 'Untouchables'**

The woman in today's Gospel was a Canaanite.

The Canaanites were a pagan people in Jesus' time.

They were considered sinners, untouchable in the culture of Jesus.

When the Canaanite woman approached Jesus his disciples wanted to send her away... she was a pagan.

Jesus himself doesn't seem to want to deal with her.

He explains to her that he has been sent to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel'.

Was He testing her?

The woman next does Jesus homage and calls him 'Lord' and asks for his help – after all, it's about her daughter, not her. Her daughter is 'tormented by a demon'?

What demons torment us or our loved ones...

Oppressive fears which rob us of our peace of mind?

Excessive worries which reveal our inability to control our lives as much as we would like to... our health, our security, our jobs?

What about addictions which 'torment' so many today...

300 Americans die each day from Opioid addiction?

And what about alcohol, porn, shopping or internet addictive behaviors?

The Canaanite woman wants Jesus to heal her daughter.

She is persistent. She won't be put off. She won't be turned aside.

Listen to her beautiful rejoinder to Jesus' seemingly harsh comment...

Jesus says:

*It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.*

Ouch!

She responds:

*Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.*

When we approach Jesus do we call him 'Lord'?

We know that he is our shepherd, our savior, our deliverer, and hopefully even our friend.

But is he our 'Lord'?

Do we love Jesus with our whole heart, our whole mind, all of our strength... are we devoted to Jesus?

St. Francis de Sales describes 'devotion' as 'love on fire'.

Are our hearts on fire with our love of Jesus?

Is Jesus our King, our Captain, our 'Lord'?

Or just a friend?

The Canaanite woman knelt before Jesus as her 'Lord'.

What does the Gospel say?

*... Then Jesus said to her in reply 'O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.'*

The Gospel concludes:

*... And the woman's daughter was healed from that hour.*

## **Faith**

What a beautiful story of a faith that would not let go,  
a faith that recognizes that we are not in charge all of the time,  
that we can't handle every situation,  
that sometimes life throws problems at us – or we cause problems –  
that are well beyond our ability to handle or solve.

Faith recognizes that our lives are not just about ourselves.

Faith recognizes that we are not God.

Can we approach Jesus and ask for help?

Do we love our Jesus and trust Him?

Are we devoted to our Jesus?

Can we kneel before Jesus and call Him 'Lord'?

Can we reach out for his hand during the storms that life throws our way?

Remember that St. Monica persistently prayed for her son Augustine... for years.

Remember that Mary stood by the foot of the Cross,  
loving her Son and accompanying him on what seemed his final, heart-breaking journey – the journey to death?

Mary's trust in loving God did not rule out the terrible storms that life threw her way.

**Conclusion**

As we continue with this Mass we come before our Lord Jesus.  
We remember his love poured out for us on the Cross.  
We are invited to be strengthened by His very Body and Blood.

We place our needs before Jesus... humbly and in faith and trust.