

**Homily – Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher – August 20, 2023**

Jesus' attitude may seem confusing to us. However, the words he uses – apparently showing prejudice against the Canaanite woman – are not his own. They belong to the official Jewish theology. The disciples want to get rid of the annoying woman and Jesus wants to teach them a wonderful lesson. Every people and every generation are faced with the same temptation. It is not easy to accept the truth that God “wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim 2:4).

In the second reading, Paul shows great concern for his fellow Jews, as he writes to the Gentiles. The people of Israel received the gift to be God's chosen ones, not for their exclusive benefit, but so that God “might have mercy upon all.” (Rom). The fulfillment of God's promise to them is the gift of his Son to the world through them. Now the Gentiles are the recipients of salvation through Christ, and the Jews may choose to be saved through their witness. God's gifts are always meant to be shared. As opposed to the things of this world, God's gifts are multiplied as they are shared.

The first reading, from the Book of Isaiah, points in the same direction. It stresses the lesson that the Lord teaches the disciples in the gospel, thanks to the faith of the Canaanite woman: “my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” (Is). But at the beginning, the reading stresses the condition that must be met to be able to accept God's gift of mercy: “Observe what is right, do what is just...” True justice is the fruit of mercy. The woman's faith goes a long way, for the Lord to be able to take advantage of it to warn the

disciples against prejudice and a false sense of entitlement. God's gifts often come from unexpected sources. And Salvation is meant to become more accessible to others through us.

All are welcome! God abandons no one! However, there is another condition, which goes together with our willingness to become instruments for God's outreach to others. Saint Paul transpires the courage of faith in his words to the Romans. Pope Francis points out that it takes courage to pray like the Canaanite woman: with this *"parrhesia, the courage to speak to God face to face. And sometimes, when one sees how these people struggle with the Lord to have something, one thinks that they are arm wrestling with God, in order to get what they ask for. They are convinced, they have faith that the Lord can give them this grace."*

You have been given a call, sharing in a time-honored mission, to protect the sacred place that witnessed the Resurrection. Delve into that mystery of the Lord's witness to life, so you may be ready to testify to the truth that Jesus lives. Just like the disciples were taught a tough lesson that set their ears attuned to the voice of the Holy Spirit, the Lord also wishes to speak to you through the witness of others. Be open to learn from simple people. The Lord speaks to us through unexpected people, so that we believe that he is truly alive and present among us, in such a way that we can announce the Resurrection with courage.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe, the most gifted creature, continue to help you imitate her humble generosity through her intercession.