

Read



Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

Matthew 15:21-28

LIVING THE WORD

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 16, 2020



REFLECTION

The woman in today's Gospel passage was confronting an injustice she saw. Her daughter was in need of healing, but Jesus had told her that he was only sent by God to help the Jews. She spoke up and challenged what she saw as injustice, the cultural divisions that kept her from freely approaching Jesus. Jesus used this moment to demonstrate to the disciples that anyone can call out to God for his grace and mercy and he will answer.

We are faced with different types of injustice every day. Some of them might affect us directly, such as an unfair situation at school. Other injustices affect those we interact with but may not know well enough to know that there is a problem. These people could be your classmates or teammates. Still more injustices affect the world and the many people that inhabit it. You only need to turn on the television or scroll through your newsfeed to see stories of war, poverty, and other tragedies. In response to these things, you may hear of people who become involved in social justice activities. Social justice begins by looking at the systems that govern our communities, towns, states, and nation to see if they are just. If they are not found to be just, then we engage in the work of confronting the root causes in systems that promote injustice.



ACTION

Find out more about social justice and how we are called to participate in the work of justice by learning about the Two Feet of Love in Action project from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The "two feet" are charity and social justice, working together to enact changes in your local communities. Check out the link below to find out how you can participate in the Creating on the Margins contest to use your voice to address social injustices in your community



<http://www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/multimedia-youth-contest/index.cfm>



QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Have you ever used your voice to name an injustice you have seen?
- ❖ How have you worked to address the injustice after you named it?



August 16, 2020

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #118A

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

Matthew 15:21-28

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

In today's Gospel, we hear of Jesus' healing of a girl who is possessed by a demon. The girl's mother, a Canaanite, seeks out Jesus to ask him to help her daughter. She goes beyond the cultural divide to seek out Jesus, a Jew. The woman's persistence and belief in Jesus' power to heal makes Jesus take note of her great faith. Jesus then goes beyond cultural boundaries to receive her petition and heal her daughter. The healing stories are significant because they demonstrate that God cares for the sick and infirm, and in turn, we should do the same.

Q FOCUS: *Jesus' love and care for others reaches beyond cultural boundaries.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

The Church celebrates the memorial of St. Pius X on August 21. St. Pius X was pope during the early twentieth century, just before World War I began. During his time as pope, he encouraged many liturgical reforms. He is best known for lowering the age of reception of First Communion. He also encouraged the frequent reception of Communion by all Catholics. He saw it as a way of deepening one's relationship with Jesus.

Church Teaching Connection

"If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, 'those who cannot repay you' ([Luke] 14:14). There can be no room for doubt or for explanations which weaken so clear a message" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 48).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 15:21-28

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

At that time, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon." But Jesus did not say a word in answer to her. Jesus' disciples came and asked him, "Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us." He said in reply, "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 in reply, "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.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today’s readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

All parents want the best for their children, and when parents see their children in pain, they too experience pain. It is difficult to watch your child suffer; in the end, most parents would choose to take away or take on the pain and suffering from their child. The Canaanite woman must have been so sad, scared and helpless. She watched her daughter suffer, and she could not do anything for her. She wanted her daughter to be healed and rescued from the pain that she was experiencing.

► **Has your parent or guardian ever tried to relieve your suffering from an illness, injury, break-up, or otherwise difficult time? What did he or she do to help you?**

The Canaanite woman was persistent. She sought out Jesus and called out to him, informing him of her daughter’s condition. At first, it seems as though Jesus is not compassionate to her plight. The disciples want to ignore her because she is not Jewish.

Nevertheless, the woman persists and approaches Jesus again. She begs him to help her daughter. She recognizes Jesus as a miracle worker, a healer.

► **In what have you been persistent? How does persistence take shape in your life (school, sports, relationships, etc.)?**

The Canaanite woman’s persistent faith and deep concern for her daughter’s well-being moves Jesus to heal her daughter. He recognizes these important qualities in the woman and then heals the woman’s daughter.

This is not only a statement of the woman’s care for her daughter, but it also shows that Jesus’ love goes beyond cultural boundaries. In Jesus’ time, much like today, there were many societal norms that people followed. Certain groups of people did not interact with other groups of people, ignoring them or fighting with them. Despite the protest of the disciples, Jesus acknowledges her request because her faith is great. There is no limit to God’s grace when we open ourselves up to receive it.

► **When have you seen God’s love go beyond societal boundaries?**

► **How can you be a model of this in your school or activities?**

In addition to the recognition that God’s work transcends human limits, this passage also shows us that taking care of the sick and infirm is an important part of our life of faith. Visiting the sick is one of our corporal works of mercy—those acts that we are called to do in service of others because of Christ’s love for us (see Matthew 25:31–46). Through the healing miracles, we learn that Jesus cares for the sick in body, mind, and soul; therefore, we should do the same.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 10.

A mother seeks out the healing power of Jesus on behalf of her daughter.

God's grace goes beyond any human division.

Care for the sick is an important expression of our Christian faith.

Act the Word

Persistence in Prayer

Have the young people divide into small groups. Use the following discussion questions to guide their reflection on the importance of persistence in our faith life.

- ✧ What is persistence?
- ✧ What are some school or extracurricular activities that you persist in so that you excel?
- ✧ What motivates you to continue working on these activities, even in the face of challenges?
- ✧ Why should you be persistent in your prayer life?
- ✧ What is the result of continually turning to God in prayer?

After giving the groups some time to reflect on these questions, invite the young people to share any insights they had during their discussion.

Closing Prayer

Lord our God,
there are no outsiders in your Kingdom,
for your love reaches beyond the
boundaries we mark out between us,
and touches the hearts of all who live.
May we learn to love others as you love them.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.