

# Readings for Sunday, August 16, 2020

## Introduction

In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

## Prayer of the Day

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## First Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community—not race, nationality, or any other category.

1Thus says the Lord:

Maintain justice, and do what is right,  
for soon my salvation will come,  
and my deliverance be revealed.

6And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,  
to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord,  
and to be his servants,  
all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it,  
and hold fast my covenant—

7these I will bring to my holy mountain,  
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;  
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices  
will be accepted on my altar;  
for my house shall be called a house of prayer  
for all peoples.

8Thus says the Lord God,  
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,  
I will gather others to them  
besides those already gathered.

## Psalm: Psalm 67

Let all the peoples praise you, O God. (Ps. 67:3)

1May God be merciful to | us and bless us;  
may the light of God's face | shine upon us.

2Let your way be known | upon earth,  
your saving health a- | mong all nations.

3Let the peoples praise | you, O God;  
let all the | peoples praise you.

4Let the nations be glad and | sing for joy,  
for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the na- | tions on earth.

5Let the peoples praise | you, O God;  
let all the | peoples praise you.

6The earth has brought | forth its increase;  
God, our own | God, has blessed us.

7May God | give us blessing,  
and may all the ends of the earth | stand in awe.

## Second Reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.

[Paul writes:] <sup>1</sup>I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2a</sup>God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

<sup>29</sup>For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. <sup>30</sup>Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, <sup>31</sup>so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. <sup>32</sup>For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

## Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.

<sup>21</sup>Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.  
<sup>22</sup>Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon."  
<sup>23</sup>But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."  
<sup>24</sup>He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."  
<sup>25</sup>But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me."  
<sup>26</sup>He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."  
<sup>27</sup>She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."  
<sup>28</sup>Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.