

## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

August 20, 2017

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7 + Romans 11:13-15, 29-32 + Matthew 15:21-28

**O WOMAN,  
GREAT IS  
YOUR FAITH!**



**Reflection by: Sister Jeanne Goyette, OP**

She was an annoyance – following them and continually calling out. And, besides, she was a stranger from another ethnic group. She had no business asking for favors. Send her away! But she persists and even in spite of a rebuke from Jesus, she responds, “Even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.” Her daring and creative response reveals her faith in this Jewish Messiah as well as an unshakable love for her daughter. Jesus is moved by her great faith and heals her daughter. Jesus was changed through the encounter with this Canaanite woman. Whether he was challenging her with his rebuke or truly believed he should reserve his healing power for the Israelites, his healing power was expanded to embrace people without boundaries and not just those of the house of Israel.

This woman of great faith challenges us to consider these questions: How persistent is our faith? Do we continue to believe when others consider us foolish? When we have waited a long time? When there is suffering? When God does not seem to be listening? When differences in belief can divide us? Do we continue to believe?

Perhaps it is in those circumstances that not only is our faith deepened, but also our creativity and love can be expanded. Maybe we need to be open to the hidden graces in the situation. To consider an alternative focus. Or call on others we have not considered helpful. Faith can change us and will we be open to those changes?

May this woman be a model for us. May our faith be deepened in the circumstances of life by faithful love for the God who has provided, is providing and will continue to provide.

I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.