

- The theme of all of our readings today is that the plan of God is to bring people of all races, nations, and peoples into His kingdom.
- We see that very clearly in our first reading today.
- Remembering that the prophet Isaiah lived 500 years prior to the coming of Jesus...and already God is revealing:
- *The foreigners [the non-Jews] who join themselves to the LORD, ministering to him, loving the name of the LORD, and becoming his servants—
all who keep the sabbath free from profanation and hold to my covenant,
them I will bring to my holy mountain and make joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar,
for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.*
- Isaiah is prophesying about US...telling us that all people faithful to Him are to be folded into God's chosen people...
- ...folded into what we read of in the first letter of Peter...that all of faithful Christians are “...*a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*” (1Pe 2:9 RSV)
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- And that Jesus has continued this theme is more than plain.
- As those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours were reminded this morning in the Office of Readings, Jesus sends His disciples out to be “*the salt of the earth*”—the whole earth...and to be “the light to the world”—light to the whole world.
- As Jesus tells the before His Ascension, “...*you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*” (Acts 1:4)...and at the end of Matthew: “Go *therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the*

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... ” (Mat 28:19 RSV)

- We are to reflect His light and goodness toward all others.
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- We are fortunate; we have the explicit teaching of the Church and the scriptures to guide us...that which we know is Truth.
- Many aren't so fortunate; many have never heard of Jesus, or have never had the Gospel preached to them effectively...or at all.
- The Church teaches that, for those who have heard the Gospel effectively, they are bound to live by that Gospel, for God speaks in their hearts.
- But what of those who have never heard the Gospel effectively or at all —whether Muslim, Hindu, pagan, or whatever?
- Neither are they excluded from salvation if they attempt to live a good and moral life to the best of their knowledge and understanding.
- They will not be condemned for what they do not know. Only God knows all things that go into a man or woman and His ultimate expectations for each...and thus we are to leave all judgment to Him.
- We as individuals would be foolish to think we know the mind of God—He whose thoughts and ways are, as scripture reminds us, as high above our own as the Heavens are above the earth.
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- Now this universality of salvation and all men having the opportunity to be gathered under the aegis of God's people is the theme of our Gospel today as well.
- Jesus seems harsh at first in his response to the Canaanite woman.
- But it only seems so. He is drawing her out as a test of her faith.
- Jesus and the disciples were in the region of Tyre and Sidon... north of Galilee, and which is today part of Lebanon...occupied

the Canaanites...the people the Israelites displaced when Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land.

- So there was no love lost between them even after 1500 years.
- And in this much harsher age, there was none of this “love your enemies” stuff.
- The “love for enemies” that Jesus preached was interpreted by his disciples as only “love for adversaries among *your own people*”, not for other countries and peoples. That understanding would come later.
- You’re able to see that by the response of the disciples—no pity whatsoever: “*Tell her to go away. Who cares about the daughter of a pagan?*”
- Apparently the reputation of Jesus had spread even to the pagan territory—that’s why this foreign woman comes to him and begs: “*Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David!*” ...using that title for the Jewish Messiah-King, which she believes He is.
- She has more faith in Him than many of His own people.
- But He says nothing to her...and so she humbles herself before Him and continues her desperate plea: “*Lord, help me.*”
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- Then (to us) that apparently harsh kick in the teeth: “*It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.*”
- But before you think Jesus is just an ol’ meanie, know that He was simply using a proverb common for the day...and this quick, sharp-witted woman comes back with a proverb of her own: “... *even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.*”
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- But Jesus doesn’t heal the woman’s daughter because of her sharp wit; Jesus heals her because of the mother’s unwavering faith—even in the face of apparent rejection.
- She refused to stop her prayer because it seemed she wasn’t heard.

- Rather...she showed humility and persistence and demonstrated an unwavering faith in him.
- And because of her faith and persistence, Jesus commends her and answers her prayer: “*O woman, great is your faith! [Therefore] Let it be done for you as you wish.*” And her daughter was healed.
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- That is one of our most important lessons in this Gospel today: to be persistent in prayer...even when it seems we aren’t being heard.
- But God cannot NOT hear our prayers.
- As Jesus tells us: “*What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, ...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!*” (Luk 11:11-13 RSV)
- But neither will He give us a serpent disguised as a fish, nor a scorpion disguised as an egg.
- When some evil comes to us, it is an opportunity for us to shine in the eyes of God...as did the Canaanite woman in the Gospel... either by prayer and persistence in faith, or in simply doing what is right when tempted to do evil.
- Yes...God seeks ALL peoples for His kingdom, as St. Paul tells us: “[He] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1Ti 2:4 RSV)
- And for those who think some race, people or nation is to be excluded, point them to Revelation 5:9:
- “*...the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb [Jesus]...and they sang... ‘...thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth.’*” (Rev 5:8-10)...
- And later St. John writes: “*I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and*

peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands... ” (Rev 7:9-11 RSV)

- The Christian rejoices in all people coming to Christ’s Church, for as St. Paul admonishes: “*Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, [or] free man...but [rather] Christ is all, and in all.*” (Col 3:11 RSV)

Reading 1

[Is 56:1, 6-7](#)

Thus says the LORD:

Observe what is right, do what is just;
for my salvation is about to come,
my justice, about to be revealed.

The foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
ministering to him,
loving the name of the LORD,
and becoming his servants—
all who keep the sabbath free from profanation
and hold to my covenant,
them I will bring to my holy mountain
and make joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be acceptable on my altar,
for my house shall be called
a house of prayer for all peoples.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8](#)

R. (4) O God, let all the nations praise you!

May God have pity on us and bless us;
may he let his face shine upon us.

So may your way be known upon earth;
among all nations, your salvation.

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

May the nations be glad and exult
because you rule the peoples in equity;
the nations on the earth you guide.

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you!

May God bless us,
and may all the ends of the earth fear him!

R. O God, let all the nations praise you!

Reading II

[Rom 11:13-15, 29-32](#)

Brothers and sisters:

I am speaking to you Gentiles.

Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles,
I glory in my ministry in order to make my race jealous
and thus save some of them.

For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world,
what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.
Just as you once disobeyed God
but have now received mercy because of their disobedience,
so they have now disobeyed in order that,
by virtue of the mercy shown to you,
they too may now receive mercy.

For God delivered all to disobedience,
that he might have mercy upon all.

Gospel

[Mt 15:21-28](#)

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.