

FAITH @ Home

16TH AUGUST 2026: 20TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME - YEAR A

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore
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Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Isaiah 56:1,6-7

Responsorial Psalm:

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

Second Reading:

Romans 11:13-15,29-32

Gospel:

Matthew 15:21-28



"Woman, you have great faith.
Let your wish be granted."

Image: canva

Hear



Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one?
No worries, you can find this week's readings online [HERE](#).

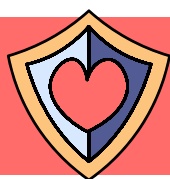
Reflect



In the Gospel today we hear Jesus speaking to a Canaanite woman who wants Jesus to heal her demon-possessed daughter.

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Do you feel you have the confidence of the Canaanite woman when you pray? Do you believe that God hears all of your prayers, that He listens with a father's heart?
- It has been said that God answers all our prayers in one of three ways: *Yes, Not Yet, I Have Something Better in Mind!* Pray with renewed confidence this week, trusting in your loving Father to provide for your needs since He knows what ultimately is necessary for us on this path through life.

Family Prayer



*Dear Jesus, thank you for knowing the needs of our heart
and for always hearing our prayers. Help us to trust in your
answer, your timing and your love for us! Amen*

Chat



In today's readings we hear about the Canaanite woman's persistence in asking Jesus to heal her daughter.

- What is it like to persistently ask for something and not get it? What makes it easier to accept?
- What is it like to persistently ask for something and to finally get it? How does it make you feel?
- Are we persistent in our prayers or do we give up when we think we're not being listened to?

Family Challenge!



Think about setting up a noticeboard or wall space in your house - on one side, have prayers for intercession, and on the other side, leave space for the prayers that God answers - sometimes we forget to acknowledge and thank God for His goodness!



"WHY DOESN'T GOD ANSWER MY PRAYER? I FEEL AS IF GOD IS IGNORING ME!"

Jesus, today's Gospel states, "withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon." It was the region, north of Galilee, in which the wicked Queen Jezebel had dwelt, and also where Elijah went in order to live with the destitute widow (1 Kngs 17:8-24). Also, recall that earlier, when Jesus had reproached those Israelite towns in which he had performed miracles and yet was rejected, he had declared: "For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt 11:20-22).

Jesus knew that his mission, focused initially on Israel, would reach out to the wider pagan world. Why, then, did Jesus say, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"? Part of the answer is that Jesus was impressing upon his disciples the priority and trajectory of his mission. Israel was to be given every opportunity to accept the Messiah, precisely because Israel was to be the firstborn of all the nations. We cannot overestimate the deep love that Jesus had for his people and land, nor should we ignore the obvious hurt and deep frustration caused by the lack of repentance and faith among his land and people.

How did the Canaanite woman know about Jesus? We don't know for certain, but it is apparent that word of Jesus and his deeds had spread beyond Israel. Whatever the case, the woman's approach to Jesus and the disciples was both obnoxious and remarkable. She literally screamed at them, displaying her obvious desperation and suffering; she was, simply, in serious need of mercy and a miracle—and she knew it.

"Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David!" she yelled, "My daughter is tormented by a demon." Notice that her first request was not for physical help, but for spiritual mercy. By God's grace, she recognized that Jesus was not a magician or a traveling teacher; he possessed real authority and power. Jesus, however, did not answer. Yet, he also didn't send her away. A profound lesson was about to be revealed to the annoyed disciples. They asked Jesus to rebuke her, and he referenced his mission to Israel. That response is puzzling, of course, because if he was sent only to Israel, why were they not in Israel? And why did he not tell the annoying woman to leave?

The answers are found in the fact that Jesus seeks those who recognize their need to be saved, to repent, to follow him, and to exercise real faith. The woman, meanwhile, approached and "did Jesus homage," quietly uttering the most basic and fundamental of prayers at the feet of God: "Lord, help me." The Pharisees had rejected Jesus, thinking they had all they needed; the towns refused to repent, believing they were without fault. But the Canaanite woman knew her need and her fault.

Until that moment, Jesus had not spoken to her. When he did, he used words that reflected the standard Jewish perspective toward pagans. In doing so, he showed how the same dark pride was the source of both the rejection of the Incarnate Word and the dismissal of those who were Gentiles. The woman was willing to humbly eat scraps from the table of the Israelites, and Jesus was willing to humble himself on the Cross, despite being the King of kings.

She, of course, was a sinner, and he is the Son of God. But both were familiar with pain and rejection, and both were willing to sacrifice everything for those who were lost and dying. God always hear us, especially when we say, "Lord, help me."

taken from <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/>



**POPE'S
INTENTION
FOR
AUGUST**

FOR EVANGELIZATION IN THE CITY

Let us pray that in large cities often marked by anonymity and loneliness we find new ways to proclaim the Gospel, discovering creative paths to build community.

9 Day Back to School Novena



Check out this 9 Day Back-to-School Challenge from Busted Halo to get refocused for the school year ahead!



CARLO'S CORNER

HE HEARS YOUR PRAYERS

Have you every felt like God isn't listening? Have you ever prayed desperately for something and not received the answer you



were looking for? It's so hard, and it can prove to be a serious challenge to our faith in a loving God.

But God is a loving Father, He hears all of our prayers, He sees our tears, He hears our sighs, our groans, even the times when we can't put words on our thoughts but just offer our hearts.

What is our image of God? Do we see Him as a genie, or a Divine ATM? Do we convince ourselves that if we just say the right prayers and do the right things, He'll dispense the graces we or others we pray for need? That's not a real relationship - as Fr Mike says in his video, that can be a "manipulationship".

God is Father - and as father He knows the deepest needs of our hearts and loves us, and those we pray for even more than we ever could. So when we pray, we can pray with confidence, that God hears us and loves us.

The Canaanite woman confidently presented her request to Jesus, and her faith was strong. Let's pray to have a strong faith, one that does not waver based on instant results, but relies on trust and confidence in a loving Father who sees all, knows all and wants the maximum of our happiness.

Why not set up a prayer space in your room? On one side, put prayers for petition, and on the other leave space to put your answered prayers!



**When God doesn't
answer your prayers
(Fr Mike Schmitz)**



**Good Good Father -
Chris Tomlin**



To the Heights Youth Resource also available



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