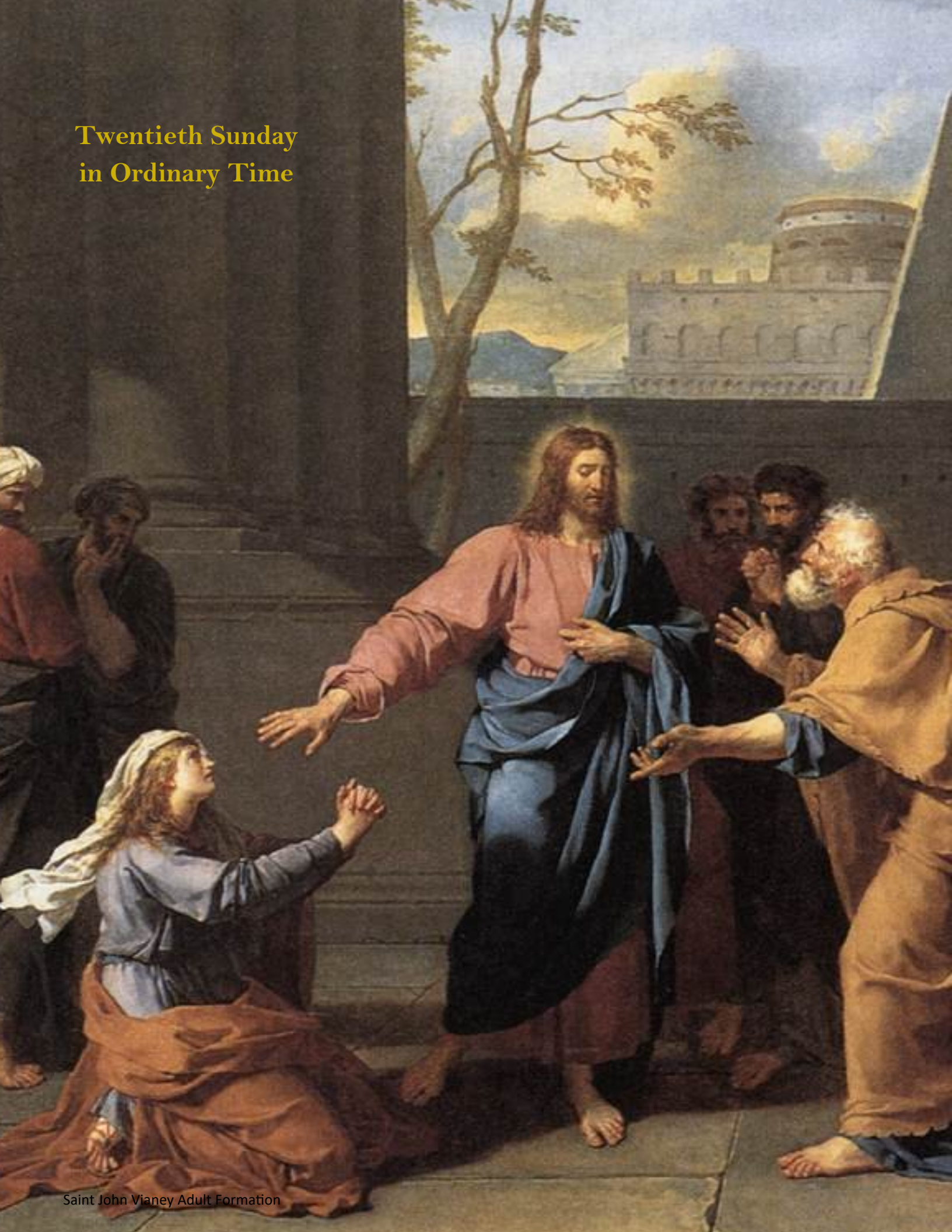


Twentieth Sunday
in Ordinary Time



Order for Liturgy of the Word

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Entrance Antiphon: Leader

Turn your eyes, O God, our shield; and look on the face of your anointed one; one day within your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

Ps 84 (83): 10 -11

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Sisters and Brothers, God desires to converse with us through his Word. Let us bless him for his goodness. Blessed be God forever. **Response:** Blessed be God forever.

Introduction: Leader

We gather today to celebrate the Lord's Day. One with our sisters and brothers and the entire Church, we will listen to God's Word and join in prayer. As we prepare to hear of God's love poured out through Christ, let us acknowledge that He is the source of pardon and strength:

All: *The Confiteor*

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Leader: In acknowledgement and thanksgiving for God's mercy we offer our praise:

All: *The Gloria*

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men of good will. We praise You. We bless You. We adore you. We glorify You. We give You thanks for Your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, O God the almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only-begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the

Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Leader: Let us pray:

O God, who have prepared for those who love you good things which no eye can see, fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love, so that, loving you in all things and above all things, we may attain your promises, which surpass every human desire. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

First reading: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: 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. The word of the Lord. **R.** Thanks be to God.

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!

Second reading:

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans:

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. The word of the Lord. **R.** Thanks be to God

Gospel acclamation:

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom and cured every disease among the people.

Cf. Mt 4:23

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel proclamation:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew:

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.

The Gospel of the Lord. **R.** Praise to you, lord Jesus Christ.

Often in the Scriptures, there is the tension or theme concerning who belongs and who does not. Jesus himself stood in the middle of this tension all of his public life. Israel jealously protected its sanctity as God's holy people, by excluding anyone from outside its borders; they were "foreigners." They were to be avoided, in some cases, not even to be looked at or spoken to.

In today's First Reading from the prophet Isaiah we hear something new, quite different. These are the first verses of the third distinct section and author of the book of Isaiah, hence the name, *Third Isaiah*. The promises of *Second Isaiah* have been fulfilled. The people of Israel have been freed from their exile and have returned to their holy land and their re-consecrated temple. Now there is to be a new way of living faithfully the Covenant with the Lord.

"Let the immigrants in!" "Do not exclude the foreigners!" The prophet is calling the people to embrace those who honor the one God, the Lord of the Covenant. If those newcomers from other religions observe the holy customs, especially the Sabbath, then God's justice will be revealed to all of the people. They are welcomed by God and are therefore to be welcomed by God's people even into the holy Temple.

Within the Temple in Jerusalem was the "holy of holies." Few were allowed to enter there. In this reading from Isaiah we hear the beginning of the belief that the holiness of God was being extended through the holiness of the people of Israel to those whom God was attracting to be a new kind of Israel.

Today's Gospel passage can make Jesus and his disciples appear quite guilty of prejudice and selective charity. A non-Jewish woman, that is a foreigner, from an ancient enemy of the Jews, calls to Jesus for help with her sick daughter.

Usually we see Jesus responding quickly and with great compassion. But here is something unusual: Jesus turns his back on her. His disciples ask him to grant her request and send her away, she is a bother. There is tension.

Jesus makes his statement according to Matthew's basic theme that Jesus is sent first to recall, recover, rededicate the people of Israel. They are the lost sheep. The woman makes a gesture of faith in him to which he replies, continuing the theme: He has come to feed the Jews and not feed the little pests of other houses.

She turns Jesus' words back on him. Perhaps she could be like a little puppy and just have a scrap. Jesus, seeing her faith, the same faith to which Jesus is inviting his Jewish family, grants her request. The daughter who was possessed by a demon has now been healed through an act of faith on her behalf.

Each of us has our own boundaries and we have constructed our own walls. Those we have allowed in, through our own Ellis Islands, and those we exclude. Politically, there are many sides to the Gospel story but as followers of Jesus we know the inside story—that he has welcomed us and he has welcomed "those others" as well. Each of us is invited to be, in our turn, a spiritual Ellis Island—open to all; open to life.

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Having listened to God's word in these passages from Holy Scripture we now profess our faith in all that He has revealed:

All—Profession of Faith:

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate, he suffered
death and was buried, and rose

again on the third day in accordance
with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the
Son,

Who with the Father and the Son is
adored and glorified, who has spoken
through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism
for the forgiveness of sins and I look
forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful—Leader

Introduction: Joining ourselves to the Lord and loving in his name so that his “way be known upon the earth among all nations”, we offer our prayers:

Intentions:

For the Church: that we may be instruments of God’s mercy, guides for all who are seeking Him, and companions to those following Him; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For leaders of our cities, states, and nation: that they possess sincere respect for one another, express their ideas and concerns thoughtfully, and work to promote the common good of society; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For a spirit of gracious hospitality: that we always and everywhere welcome visitors and guests into our homes and faith community; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For parents and teachers: that God will inspire them and give them an increase in creativity and patience as they undertake to instruct children and youth during the pandemic restrictions: we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For authentic trust in God: that we may call out in faith, with sincerity and conviction, to God who saves and delivers us from anxiety, doubt, suffering and need; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are sick: that they have the unyielding faith of the Canaanite women and remain persistent in supplication; we pray the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died: may our Lord’s face shine upon them forever as they rest in his presence; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.



Prayer: O Lord, like the Canaanite women we call out to you; hear the prayers we have placed before you. As you did with her, hear and grant our petitions according to your will. We offer this and all our prayers through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Leader: Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Leader: With the love of Christ, let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Leader: Communion Antiphon:

With the Lord there is mercy; in him is plentiful redemption. **Ps 130(129):7**

All—Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Leader: A Prayer After Spiritual Communion

Made partakers of Christ through the Sacraments, we humbly implore your mercy, Lord, that, conformed to his image on earth, we may merit also to be his coheirs in heaven. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Response: Amen.

Blessing—making the sign of the cross:

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us, and bring us to everlasting life.

Response: Amen.

Leader: Let us go in peace.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Closing Thoughts

That ancient problem of the one and the many has taken a million shapes. It is seen in the battle of change with continuity, the clash of novelty with permanence, the claims of individuality versus universality.

The conflict also appears in passages of scripture that contrast the particularities of Judaism or Christianity with the universality of God. Isaiah announced a God whose salvation and justice would be open to aliens. "For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Thus, the psalmist wrote that all nations would come to praise God. St. Paul, in his reconciling claims of Jew and Gentile, reminded the Romans that a more universal truth of God's mercy is revealed in the failures of both.

Even the accounts of Jesus' meetings with Gentiles balance the claims of inclusion and exclusion. He seems rather harsh to the Canaanite woman who seeks healing for her demon-possessed daughter. At first Jesus does not even respond, and his disciples nag him to dismiss her because of her stubborn shouts. When Jesus remarks that his mission is only to the lost sheep of Israel, the woman presses her point, not only begging more insistently for help, but rebutting his rejection. "Even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their master."

Although the issue of tribal and religious inclusion might be discussed here, especially in light of Isaiah's promise of universalism and Paul's appeal to Gentile and Jew, what is more important about the Gospel story is the revelation of that common trait of all men and women: that which engages the healing power of Jesus. It is the heart, the plea, the persistent hope. "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter is healed.

The Canaanite woman embodies the constant and universal quality that every human heart – Jew or Gentile, woman or man, slave or free – possesses. It was her and is our own willingness to call out in faith. This power, slumbering in us all from the moment of our beginnings in our mothers' wombs, whether ever actualized or not, is what each of us uniquely possesses and yet has in common with all the rest of us. From the time of Sarah and Abraham to Mary's "yes" and Joseph's word of trust; from Romans to rabbis, Africans to Indians, it is the endowment of our personhood that unites us all in our humanity. It is also what makes everyone of us singularly strategic in playing out our particular life drama.

Human persons are endowed with the capacity to take possession of their lives and offer their lives in faith. This is what makes every man and woman wholly equal before the world and God.

Yet the universal blessing of our humanity is found only in individuals. Each of us must act out the drama of a single life alone. There is no understudy, no replacement in these matters. Our common gift is displayed in singular and particular beauty. Thus, the paradox of the one and the many is that the very gift that makes us all most alike makes each of us altogether unique.

John Kavanaugh, SJ

Art: *Woman at the Feet of Christ* by Jean-Germain Drouas

Crumbs from the Table

Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." Matthew 15:28 (NIV)

Based on Matthew 15:21-28 (NIV)



O D N F V L Q K R N G E O L A
Z S T F E K M E R C Y R A Z U
V Q F A I P J D P Y D N E T Q
U C R H E L P O Z O P T N A S
G S U D O G S Q C R Y I N G T
I B H Q T Q S W H E A L E D Y
C I Q G A O Z H L F A L L R S
D W L Q B C Q M E O L F J F U
C K J I L J R E D E S D M A F
C Y N W E E J U E E P T P I F
T B Z E O E H E M Y M K C T E
J N H N L M Z H S B M O W H R
J S M J Q T A A R U S R N F I
A P B Z K O L N N W S H F K N
X I T D A U G H T E R Z T D G

HEALED
GREAT
DEMON
EAT

DAUGHTER
CRYING
HELP
FAITH

SHEEP
DOGS
TABLE
CRUMBS

FALL
LOST
ISRAEL
SUFFERING

MERCY
JESUS
WOMAN
KNELT