

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish **Bulletin for Teens**

From the heart



Sunday the 16th of August 2026, Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28: *Woman, you have great faith.*

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre, and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, 'Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' But he answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give her what she wants,' they said 'because she is shouting after us.' He said in reply. 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.' But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said 'help me.' He replied, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs.' She retorted, 'Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.



The Gospel of the Lord.

The context

Just before Jesus meets the Canaanite woman, Jesus has a confrontation with the Pharisees and scribes, Religious leaders from Jerusalem. They questioned why His disciples did not follow some of the religious laws around things like the ritual handwashing and avoiding contact with certain groups, such as Gentiles (non-Jews) required by Jewish tradition. Jesus' response was direct. He accused them of focusing on the rules of men, rather than the commandment of God. Jesus then on to teach them that what actually defiles a person, what makes them unclean, is not unwashed hands or contact with certain animals or people. Being clean or unclean comes from the heart, from the inside out.

The story of the Canaanite woman is a practical example of the lesson just taught: clean and unclean come from the heart.

The woman who wouldn't give up

The woman comes running after Jesus, shouting because her daughter is suffering. And what happens? Jesus doesn't answer her. He doesn't say a word. The disciples plead with Jesus to give her what she wants so that she will go away. Then Jesus says something that sounds harsh. He says that He was only sent for the 'lost sheep of Israel' (the Jews). Jesus then compares giving her help with giving the food of children to dogs. What's going on here? This doesn't seem right.

If you've ever prayed hard for something and felt that you heard nothing back then you know what that silence feels like. It doesn't feel like you are loved. It can feel like you are being ignored.

The woman doesn't give up, she doesn't go away. She kneels down and says simply, "Lord, help me." When it seems that Jesus is refusing her, she doesn't get defensive or give up. She replies humbly, still sure that He can and will help her. Jesus calls her faith great, and her daughter is healed instantly.

Food for thought

You probably know how it feels when you don't feel seen and heard. You might feel that a prayer seems to go unanswered. You might feel that you don't belong, that no one understands you. You might feel like everyone else has 'it together' and you don't.

The Canaanite woman shows us what to do with those feelings: don't give up, don't leave. She doesn't demand. She doesn't disappear when she's ignored. She kneels lower and asks again, humbly and honestly. Her persistence isn't stubbornness; it is rooted in real trust that Jesus is good, even when His silence makes that hard to believe in the moment.

That's real faith. Faith isn't about feeling good and having all the answers, it is about showing up, even when you have doubts and feel unheard, even when you can't see immediate results from your prayers.



Where in your life do you need to be like the Canaanite woman; not giving up on God, on a relationship, or on yourself? Jesus didn't heal the woman's daughter because of who she was or because she earned it. He healed the daughter because the woman trusted Him enough to keep asking and to believe that He would answer.

Bring Jesus your "Lord, help me" when you feel unsure, frightened or need courage to act. Repeat it. Don't be afraid to keep asking until you hear His answer. Trust in a God you can't yet see responding.

In this Gospel we learn:

- That faith transcends boundaries. The woman's faith was recognised and rewarded by God even through she was a Gentile. It was what was inside her that was important to Jesus.
- Persistence in prayer. The woman's unwavering persistence shows us how to approach God with respect, humility and determination when we seek His help.
- The inclusivity of God's kingdom. While Jesus' ministry initially focused on Israel, this story foreshadows the extension of God's grace to all nations, to everyone.

Cana Youth Group for Year 7 to 12 students

The Cana Youth Group meets every second Friday from 6pm to 8pm in the St Monica's meeting room.
Meeting dates for the rest of this term are the 21st of August, 4th of September and 18th of September.

For more information see the flyer in the foyer, the poster up in the foyer (or with the other notices outside the Church at St Michael's) or contact Rebecca and Katie (our Youth Coordinators) at youth.belconnennorth@cg.org.au.