

Food For Dogs?

Sunday's Gospel can give a headache both to preachers and to people in the pews. Jesus refuses to hear a woman because she is, in his metaphor, one of the "dogs." OUCH. You know the story. The Canaanite woman cries out for help and Jesus at first will not even talk to her. The disciples demand that he send her away because she is a trouble-maker, and he seems to agree with them. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," he says.

She is from Canaan, not Israel.

Finally the poor woman walks right up, does "homage" to Jesus and says, "Lord, help me." Jesus would never ignore such words, at least so we Christians and Catholics believe. Nor should we ever be deaf to words like this in our own daily lives.

However, he says to her, "It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs."

Ouch indeed. This is the line that is so hard for us to understand. So un-Jesus-like.

There are clues. She first called out to him with the words "Son of David." This is a term hallowed by use in the ancient Hebrew scriptures, always referring to the Messiah. She is a Canaanite, and they did not believe in any Messiah-to-come, especially not one that would descend from David. Yet this woman, against her whole background, seems to have belief in Jesus as Messiah.

She calls him "Lord." In Matthew's Gospel this is an explicit admission that Jesus and God are one. Going just on her language, this is proof that she believed in him as the Savior. Surely he sensed this.

But Israelites and Canaanites had long been in strife. How could "they" with their strange gods produce a woman who believes in the one God and in Jesus as the Christ? Is it possible that Jesus was drawing her out, teasing her in order to strengthen her belief?

Perhaps he was quoting the word "dogs" as a reference to names the two peoples called each other. Something like this: "my people of Israel believe in the one God and your people do not. How can I give their food to you 'dogs,' as we call you?"

The woman's quick wit provides a wonderful, humble, bantering response that wins the day. "Even dogs eat scraps that fall from their master's table," she says. It is a riposte, a parry, a counter-thrust, and Jesus loves it. She is saying, "It does not matter what a person's status is as long as they believe. And I do believe."

I'll bet Jesus smiled a great smile as he told her how great her faith was. Maybe he laughed at her fast repartee. And of course he gladly gave her what she asked; he cured her daughter.

Doesn't Christ's Holy Spirit smile within you and me when we ask for what we need? When we let nothing stand in the way, like our own origins, our status in life, our sins, and maybe even our rejection by others?

Remember when we approached Communion and held out our hands and said in effect, "Son of David, have pity on me." This is a paraphrase of the Canaanite woman. Our response is "Amen," which means "I do believe," just like the woman.

Let us mean it this Sunday, whether we attend a virtual or a real Mass.

John Foley, SJ

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 16, 2020

St. Stephens Indian Mission

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Blessed Sacrament & St. Josephs

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Sacrament of Reconciliation & Sacrament of the Sick

You may call the office to schedule an appointment for confession. If there is no answer please leave your name and phone number and Father Jim will return your call. Please do not schedule an appointment if you are sick, please wait until you are well to protect yourself and the priest. Priest and penitent will be required to wear a mask and maintain a safe six foot distance during confession.

The Sacrament of the sick will still be available for those who are terminal and is now available to those who have an upcoming surgery. Please call the office if you or a loved one is in need of this sacrament.

.....
Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house
of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our
faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you
Welcome!
.....

The purpose of St. Stephen's Indian Mission, the presence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.

Readings August 17th through August 23rd:

Mon: Ez 24:15-24; (Ps) Dt 32:18-21; Mt 19:16-22
 Tue: Ez 28:1-10; (Ps) Dt 32:26-28, 30, 35c-36b; Mt 19:23-30
 Wed: Ez 34:1-11; Ps 23:1-6; Mt 20:1-16
 Thur: Ez 36:23-28; Ps 51:12-15, 18-19; Mt 22:1-14
 Fri: Ez 37:1-14; Ps 107:2-9; Mt 22:34-40
 Sat: Ez 43:1-7ab; Ps 85:9ab, 10-14; Mt 23:1-12
 Sun: Is 22:19-23; Ps 138:1-3, 6, 8; Rom 11:33-36; Mt 16:13-20

Parish Collection

Last week mail in collection \$420
"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Corinthians 9:7

THANK YOU to all who have continued to make financial contributions to St. Stephens Indian Mission through these most trying times! God Bless!

Mass Intentions this week

8/16:	Sunday	Howard Brown on his birthday
	Sunday	For the people
8/17:	Monday	
8/18:	Tuesday	
8/19:	Wednesday	
8/20:	Thursday	
8/21:	Friday	
8/22:	Saturday	
8/23:	Sunday	Keith Spoonhunter on his birthday
	Sunday	For the people

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Praise Him now and always!

As we continue to celebrate Sunday Mass at St. Stephens, we are limited to 10 people in attendance as we follow the Wind River Intertribal Council's resolution. If you would like to be added to the rotating list of parishioners for Mass please call the office or email the parish office. Please remember that Bishop Steven's general dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation will remain in effect for the duration of Mass attendance restrictions. Mass is available for viewing on K2 Television at 9am and/or you may watch via livestream on St. Margaret's or Holy Rosary's FB pages.

Face masks will be required at Mass, use hand sanitizer, please refrain from exchanging handshakes during the Sign of Peace and maintain at least six feet apart from parishioners (except if you are in the same household) including processing to receive the Eucharist. If you are not feeling well and are scheduled to attend Mass please stay home and call the office so we can switch you with another parishioner until you feel well. Please keep our church family safe.

Having Mass offered for an anniversary, marriage, special occasion, or in memory of someone is a special gift. Cards are available at the office.
 Diocesan guideline is \$10.00 for Mass.

Please pray for the family of the deceased:

+Colleen Jenkins
 +Houston Headley

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

The churches at St. Josephs and St. Stephens are open daily from 8am-7pm for private prayer. No more than 10 people are to be in the church at one time.

Blessed Sacrament and St. Josephs



Congratulations!



*Kristina Frances Redman
 Josephine Theresa Standing Elk
 Tommie Marie Standing Elk*

who received the Sacrament of Confirmation on August 7th

Larry Rex Brown

who received his First Communion on August 7th

Garrett Charles Wells

who received the Sacrament of Confirmation on August 11th

Ambrosia Sharla Harris

who received the Sacrament of Confirmation on August 14th