



CELEBRATING AT HOME

**20TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

*A Kingdom for all (Matthew 15:21-28)*



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### Sign of the Cross

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

**Amen.**

The Lord is here, present among us.

**We are gathered with the whole Church  
in this moment of prayer.**

### Preparing to hear the Word

We have been called by God  
to be the Church,  
**the Body of Christ and the Kingdom of God  
in this world.**

We are not a building, but a people,  
gathered and grounded in  
**the Word of God,  
the love of Christ,  
and the unity of the Holy Spirit.**

### Scripture Reading *(Matthew 15:21-28)*

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.

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 up 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.

### Reflection - *A Kingdom for all*

Today's Gospel marks a turning point in the ministry of Jesus. He sees himself as sent 'only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'. That is, to those who were

deemed sinners because they could not keep the Law of Moses, and were considered beyond the care and concern of God by religious authorities.

The story centres around a confrontation between Jesus and a pagan (Canaanite) woman.

Firstly, Jesus ignores her altogether. Then, because the woman is making such a racket, the disciples ask him to give her what she wants. Jesus refuses. The woman approaches him directly and asks for help. He refuses again, quoting an ancient popular racial slur against the Canaanites. His words are harsh and demeaning, but the woman persists, defeating Jesus with her quick thinking and twisting his own imagery in her favour. He recognizes her faith and grants her wish.

St Matthew uses this story about Jesus and the woman to answer the question about who belongs in the Kingdom of God – who are the insiders and who are the outsiders?

In terms of the story, not only Israelites, but all who come with faith, are part of the Kingdom. The first reading from the Prophet Isaiah makes the same point: God's house is a house for all the peoples.

Matthew's early Christian community is struggling with accepting some non-Jews wanting to join them. Just as Jesus (the ultimate insider) moves past his own prejudices, so the members of the Kingdom and the Church must move past theirs' so that God's house of prayer will be a place of justice and integrity for all the peoples; a house from which God's salvation and healing flows.

### Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God,  
**help us to open our hearts to every race  
and every need.**

Your son learnt to overcome prejudice and fear.  
**Give us the tolerance, openness and respect.**

God, sharpen our resolve;  
**help us accept difference; strengthen our hearts.**

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### Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus,  
we pray:

**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.**

### Closing Prayer

**Ever-loving God,**  
your care extends beyond  
the boundaries of race and nation  
to the hearts of all who live.  
May the walls, which prejudice raises between us,  
crumble beneath the shadow of your outstretched  
arm.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### Blessing

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,  
**the love of God,**  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
**be with us now and always.**  
**Amen.**



# Journey into the Light

This resource is presented by the Carmelites of Australia & Timor-Leste at a time when many cannot gather together as we usually do to celebrate the Eucharist. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer all the members of our family at this time.



**The Carmelites**  
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