



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Twentieth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Then Jesus answered her,
“Woman, great is your faith! Let it
be done for you as you wish.” And
her daughter was healed instantly.

MATTHEW 15:28

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For Adults

One of the hardest things about prayer is waiting.

Many of us have prayed for something for a long time: healing for a loved one, the return of a child to the faith, reconciliation in a family, freedom from anxiety, or simply the strength to carry a heavy cross. Sometimes it can feel as though God is silent.

The Gospel today speaks directly to that experience. The Canaanite woman refuses to give up. At first, Jesus seems not to answer her. Then the disciples want to send her away. Yet she remains. She does not demand; she trusts. She kneels before Jesus and says, "Lord, help me." Those three words are among the most powerful prayers in all of Scripture.

In the end, Jesus praises her: "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." Her perseverance was not an attempt to change God's mind. Rather, it revealed the depth of her faith and her complete confidence in his mercy.

Persevering prayer changes us. It teaches us patience, deepens our trust, and reminds us that God always hears us, even when his answer comes in a different way or at a different time than we expect.

Perhaps today each of us carries a prayer that seems unanswered. Jesus invites us not to lose heart. Keep bringing that intention to him. Like the Canaanite woman, come with humility, confidence, and hope. The Lord who praised her great faith still welcomes all who call upon Him.

Today, let our prayer be simple and sincere: "Lord, help me."

Jesus always hears that prayer, and in His perfect love, He will answer in the way that leads us most deeply into life with Him.

Overview

Today's Gospel tells the story of a woman who loved her daughter very much. Her daughter was sick, and she believed that Jesus could help. At first, it seemed as though Jesus was not answering her. Many people might have walked away feeling disappointed. But she did not give up. She kept trusting Jesus and kept asking for his help.

Finally, Jesus praised her, saying, "Woman, great is your faith!" He healed her daughter because of her deep trust and perseverance.

Children understand what it feels like to wait. They may wait for a birthday, for Christmas, for good news, or for someone to get better. Sometimes they also wonder why God doesn't answer their prayers right away.

Today's readings help children discover that God always hears our prayers, even if the answer doesn't come immediately or in the way we expect. Prayer is not about making God listen; it is about staying close to Jesus and trusting that he always knows what is best.

The first reading reminds us that God welcomes everyone into his family. The Psalm invites all people to praise God. St. Paul explains that God's mercy is for everyone. The Gospel brings these messages together by showing that Jesus welcomes a woman who was not part of the people of Israel because of her great faith.

Jesus always hears our prayers. Even when we have to wait, we should never stop trusting him.

Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed.

And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

R. Let the peoples praise you, O God,
let all the peoples praise you!

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
that your way may be known upon earth,
your saving power among all nations. **R.**

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.
Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you. **R.**

The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us.
May God continue to bless us;
Let all the ends of the earth revere him. **R.**

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

Brothers and sisters:

Now I am speaking to you Gentiles¹. Inasmuch then as I am an Apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry in order to make my own people 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! The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy.

For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

The word of the Lord.

Observe a period of silence after the reading.

¹ A biblical term usually applied to non-Jews.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus went away to the district of Tyre ² and Sidon ³. A Canaanite ⁴ woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."

He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But the woman came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me."

He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

The Gospel of the Lord.

² One of the most ancient towns on the Phoenician coast. Tyre (M.R. 168297) is situated about 40km S of Sidon.

³ Sidon was considered the northern extent of Canaanite territory, as well as the northern limit of the tribes of Israel and the kingdom of David.

⁴ The people group living in the land of Canaan prior to and during the rise of the Israelites.

Background

Isaiah 56: The people of Israel felt rejected after living through very difficult times (written after the Jewish Exile in Babylon, approximately 539–500 BC) and they thought God was not hearing their prayers. As a result, through the prophet Isaiah, God shared a hopeful message with them, revealing that God is always listening and acting in their lives – even when we don't think so. Children can understand this feeling in terms of inclusion and exclusion. God's family has room for everyone if we want to be part of it—no one is too different, too young, too old, or from the wrong place. Every person is loved by God and welcomed in His house.

Psalms 67 is a joyful song that invites God to bless everyone and emphasizes the worldwide sharing of God's blessings. It encourages collective praise, reminding us that despite our differences, we all have one loving Father.

Romans 11 St. Paul emphasizes that God's plan encompasses both Jews and Gentiles, highlighting His inclusive love for everyone. Despite our mistakes, God's love and gifts remain constant. Children may feel unheard or think they disappoint God, but St. Paul reassures us that God is always ready to forgive and offers new chances each day.

Matthew 15:21–28 Jesus travels into Gentile territory, where a Canaanite woman asks Him to heal her daughter. At first, Jesus appears not to answer her request—but the woman's extraordinary faith reveals that God's love extends to everyone. Jesus publicly praises her faith and heals her daughter.

Children know what it is like to keep asking for something important. Sometimes they ask their parents repeatedly because what they are asking for really matters. They also know what it feels like to wait. This Gospel teaches that prayer is not about convincing God to care. God already loves us. The woman kept praying because she trusted Jesus completely. Children can learn that even when prayers seem unanswered, Jesus is always listening. Sometimes God's answer is "yes"; sometimes "not yet"; and sometimes He gives us something even better than we expected. The woman also teaches perseverance. She did not become angry or walk away. She stayed close to Jesus with hope.

Key Messages for Children

- † Jesus always hears your prayers, even when you have to wait.
- † Never give up praying. Keep talking to Jesus every day.
- † God loves everyone and welcomes every person into His family.

Key Messages for Leaders

- † Focus on the power of persevering prayer. The Canaanite woman teaches children to continue praying with confidence, even when answers seem delayed.
- † Help children understand that God always answers prayer, though the answer may be "yes," "not yet," or in a different way than expected.
- † Emphasize that Jesus welcomes everyone. The Gospel illustrates that God's love extends beyond every barrier of race, nationality, or background.

Leader's Personal Reflection Questions

- When God doesn't answer my prayer right away, do I keep trusting Him, or do I give up?
- Have I ever helped someone feel included instead of left out?

Takeaway

Keep praying and trusting God—Jesus always hears you.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

At the proper moment, the priest invites the children to come forward. The leaders may come forward and stand facing the altar with the children. The priest then addresses the children.

Dear children, today we hear of a woman who persevered in prayer to Jesus for her daughter's healing. Go with your leader and listen to God to find out how Jesus is always listening to you.

We will welcome you back soon.

Once most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the celebration site. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the CLoW room, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome

The leaders help the children sit and prepare. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may offer the following prayer, in these or similar words.

Let us quiet our hearts and make the Sign of the Cross. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Loving Jesus,

Thank you for bringing us together today.

**Open our hearts to hear Your Word
and help us to trust You, even when we have to wait.**

**Teach us to pray with faith, to care for others,
and to remember that You always listen because You love us.**

**May Your Holy Spirit help us to learn,
to grow, and to follow You each day.**

Amen.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, at a minimum, proclaim the Gospel.

REIMAGINED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

The readings below are intended for use after the children have heard the original reading. The intent is to allow the children to listen to the original reading and help them better understand it (not replace it).

Read at least the Gospel, then ask the children to sit down. You can then read the reimagined reading. Leaders may not have time to read all the reading.

Reimagined readers must always remain faithful to the original Scripture's intent, making it age-appropriate for children.

First Reading

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Always try to do what is good and kind.

Everyone who loves Me is welcome in My family. It doesn't matter where they come from or what language they speak. If they want to follow Me and love Me, they belong with Me.

I will welcome them into my house. It will be a happy place where everyone can pray, sing, and praise me.

My house is a house of prayer for all people.

R. Lord, let everyone praise You!

God, thank You for loving us.

Please bless us and help us to know You.

Show everyone in the whole world

how good and loving You are. **R.**

Help all people to be happy.

Help every nation sing with joy.

You are fair and kind,

and you guide us every day. **R.**

St. Paul said, God loves everyone.

Sometimes people make wrong choices and forget to follow God. But God never stops loving them. He is always ready to forgive and give them another chance.

God wants everyone to know His love and mercy. He invites all people to become part of His family.

Remember, God never takes back His love or His promises.

One day, Jesus was travelling when a mother came running to Him. She was very worried because her daughter was very sick. She called out, Jesus, please help my daughter!

At first, it seemed as though Jesus did not answer. But the mother did not give up. She came closer, knelt before Jesus, and said, Lord, help me.

Jesus saw how much she trusted Him. He smiled and said, You have great faith. Because you trusted Me, your daughter will be healed. At that very moment, her daughter became well.

Jesus wants us to trust Him as that mother did. We can always pray to Him, and we should never give up, because Jesus always listens to us and loves us.

Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions.

What did you hear?

Have you ever asked your mom or dad for something more than once? (pause)

Maybe you asked for help tying your shoes...or for a drink of water... or for a hug when you were sad.

In today's Gospel, a mother came to Jesus because her little girl was very sick. She loved her daughter so much that she wouldn't stop asking Jesus for help. At first, it seemed like Jesus wasn't answering her.

What do you think she did? (pause)

Did she give up? (pause)

No! She kept trusting Jesus. She knelt and said, "Lord, help me." Jesus saw how much she trusted Him. He told her, "You have great faith!" Then He healed her daughter.

Sometimes we pray, and God's answer doesn't come right away. Maybe we pray for someone who is sick, for a family member, or for help at school. Waiting can be hard. But today's Gospel teaches us something very important: Jesus always hears our prayers. Sometimes God says "Yes." Sometimes God says, "Not yet." Sometimes, God has an even better plan than we can see. So we never stop praying.

Who do you like to talk to when you are happy? (pause)

Who do you go to when you are scared or hurt? (pause)

Did you know you can always talk to Jesus? (pause)

Is there someone in your family or among your friends who needs our prayers today? (pause)

This week, whenever you are happy, worried, or afraid, remember these simple words from the Gospel: "Lord, help me." Jesus always listens because He loves you very much.

Alternative Reflection

This reflection is for older children, teenagers, or even young adults. It may provide CLoW leaders with a broader perspective, using the Church readings.

Have you ever worked really hard at something?

Maybe you practiced a sport until you finally learned a new skill. Maybe you studied for a test, learned to play a song on an instrument, or kept trying to ride a bike without falling.

How did you feel when you finally succeeded? (pause)

Today's Gospel tells of a woman whose sick daughter needed help. Despite Jesus' initial silence, she didn't give up. She approached Him, knelt, and prayed, "Lord, help me." Her faith and persistence led Jesus to say, "Woman, great is your faith!" and He healed her daughter.

Sometimes we feel like that woman. We pray for someone who is sick. We pray for peace in our family. We pray to do well in school. We pray for a friend who is having a difficult time. Sometimes the answer comes quickly. Sometimes we have to wait.

Waiting doesn't mean that Jesus isn't listening. It means we are learning to trust Him more deeply. Prayer isn't about convincing God to love us—He already does. Prayer helps us stay close to Jesus and place our lives in His hands.

The first reading reminds us that everyone is welcome in God's family. The Psalm invites all nations to praise Him. St. Paul tells us that God's mercy is for everyone. The Gospel shows us that great faith is trusting Jesus and never giving up.

- † Why do you think the woman kept asking Jesus for help? (pause)
- † Have you ever prayed for something for a long time? What was it? (pause)
- † Is it sometimes difficult to keep praying when nothing seems to change? (pause)
- † Who in your family, school, or neighbourhood needs your prayers this week?
(pause)

Choose one person or one situation to pray for every day this week. Even if you don't see an answer right away, keep praying with confidence.

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition, concluding it with the cue for the response: 'We pray to the Lord.' All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

The leader says:

Leader:

Today, we learned that Jesus always listens to our prayers. Trusting that He loves us, let us bring our prayers to Him, "Lord, hear our prayer."

R. Children: Lord, hear our prayer.

1. For Pope Leo, our bishops, priests, and deacons, that they may help everyone know and love Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For people all around the world, that they may know God's love and welcome one another as brothers and sisters, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For children who are sick, lonely, or afraid, that Jesus will comfort them and give them hope, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For each one of us, that we may never give up talking to Jesus and always trust that He hears our prayer, we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

5. For the prayers we hold quietly in our hearts... (pause), we pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader:

Loving Jesus, thank You for always listening to us. Help us to trust You, to care for others, and to remember that You welcome everyone into Your family. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Return to the church

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and reflect on what they have heard and what they are now doing. Be mindful of children who may have difficulty finding their families.

Please note that the Handouts are available at:

Bulletin: TheKidsBulletin.com – Goodwill donation suggested

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