

THE SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

XX IN ORDINARY TIMES

The theme common to all of today's readings is that God's salvation is not restricted to His Chosen People, the Jews, but is offered to pagans as well.

1ST READING: ISAIAH 56:1, 6-7

This passage comes from Third Isaiah, the postexilic portion of that work. The prophet foresees the day when God will welcome foreigners worshipping in His temple, providing they serve Him, love His name and keep His covenant.

Responsorial Psalm: 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 *"Let the peoples praise you, O God, let all the peoples praise you."*

This extract from Psalm 67 praises God's goodness to His people and the constancy of His love for them.

2ND READING: ROMANS 11:13-15, 29-32

This passage occurs toward the end of Paul's discussion of Israel's place in salvation history, the opening part of which we read last week. Paul believes that the pattern of salvation history will run like this: First, the gospel is proclaimed to Israel by the earliest apostles. But Israel rejects it, so Paul is called to proclaim it to the Gentiles. At the end of this letter Paul rejoices that he was able to preach freely in the capital of the Roman empire, where the pagans welcomed the Good News. This step will provoke Israel to jealousy, and Israel will then hurry to gain acceptance before the End. Then God's mercy would embrace Jews and gentiles. Then such distinctions would be irrelevant. Whatever our background we would be one in Christ.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 15:21-28

Matthew took over the story of the Canaanite woman from Mark, but with several important changes: 1. The woman is called a Canaanite instead of a Syro-Phoenician. 2. There is considerable expansion of the dialogue material in the body of the story (Mt 15:22-24). 3. Jesus praises the woman for her faith (Mt 15:28). 4. Matthew removes Jesus' saying that the children (that is, Israel) must be fed first. 5. The narrative of the woman's return home to discover that her daughter was cured of the demon is reduced to a brief statement that the girl was indeed healed (unlike Mark, Matthew is not interested in the fact that the healing was performed from a distance).

Matthew's alterations have a theological rather than a historical motivation. He shifts the interest away from the miracle to the woman's faith.

As a Canaanite, she is a stranger to the covenants of Israel. Her people's religion, was seen as the great threat to loyal commitment to the Lord. Jesus takes the barrier very seriously. He first refuses to answer her, then announces that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. It was the woman's faith that finally overcame the barrier.

NEXT SUNDAY –

XXI SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIMES (YEAR A) - TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

"Spiritual persons ought to be equally ready to experience sweetness and consolation in the things of God, or to suffer and keep their ground in dryness's of spirit and devotion, and for as long as God pleases, without their making any complaint about it."

-
St. Philip Neri

A word from Pope Francis

"I make a heartfelt plea to all people and to all communities who look to Abraham: may we respect and love one another as brothers and sisters! May we learn to understand the sufferings of others! May no one abuse the name of God through violence! May we work together for justice and peace! *Salaam!*"

THE WORD AT WORK: OUR WEEKLY REFLECTION

20TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

How could Jesus treat this poor woman with such contempt? How could He call her a dog? We'd be in serious trouble with the law if we spoke in such a way to people of a different race or religion. We have a right to expect better of Jesus. After all, He was always so welcoming, especially when someone appealed to Him for help, as did this woman.

So, what's going on here? I think Jesus is skilfully turning the contempt the Jews had for pagans on its head. Just before this Gospel extract Jesus had been criticised for not obeying the Jewish laws about ritual cleaning, which were thought to be necessary for us to be pleasing to God. They considered Him to be religiously unclean! Now He is even more provocative. He and His disciples had entered pagan territory, which was thought to be so defiling that a pious Jew would shake the dust off His clothing, as a sign of his contempt for that country and its people.

While Jesus and His disciple sought a bit of peace and quiet, a Canaanite woman cried out. She begged Jesus to cure her sick daughter. Amazingly she, a pagan, believed He had that power! Still more amazingly this pagan addressed Jesus as, 'Lord' and, 'Son of David.' But He ignored her plea for help. Why? As with us, He may delay in answering our prayers, because He wants to teach us perseverance. But the disciples, thinking of themselves, begged Jesus to give her what she wanted, so that they could all get a bit of peace! He responded to their request. That shows the value of praying for each other.

When Jesus did turn to her He told her He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel - not to pagans like her, and that it would not be fair to take the children (of Israel's) food and throw it to the house dogs -the pagans. By calling them 'dogs,' He's again testing her faith in Him almost to breaking point. He's fobbing her off with the traditional insult of calling her and her people dogs. But He does soften this, perhaps with a touch of humour, by using a word meaning, 'house dogs or pets' - not street scavengers.

But Jesus was dealing with a spirited woman! She was fighting for what was precious to her - her sick daughter. She was smart! She used what would appear to be an insult, to her advantage. She protested that even the house dogs could eat the scraps which fell from the master's table so could pagans like her. Her conclusion – Jesus had to admit no-one would be a loser -neither the master nor the Jews.

Jesus was not interested in whether or not she observed the laws about ritual washing. No, He admired her perseverance, her deep love for her daughter; above all, He admired her profound faith in Him. And, so, Jesus answered her persistent, loving prayer and healed her daughter. That pagan woman is a shining example for all of us.

In today's episode Jesus has reversed what started out as a traditional offensive, insulting Jewish rejection of a pagan, into welcoming one of them with love. Because His mission would last only a few years He had to concentrate on the lost sheep of Israel. What is more, He must try to convince His people He was fulfilling the promises God had made them – that He was their long-awaited Messiah! From that power-base the risen Lord would commission his disciples, “**...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,**” (Matt. 28.19).

In a dramatic way Jesus here makes an exception to confining His personal mission to God's Chosen People, the Jews. Today the Canaanite woman's faith in Jesus anticipates how we, of pagan origin, should respond to Him.



HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 20TH AUGUST 2017

XX SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIMES

· A ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH · THE DOMINICAN PRESENCE IN LEICESTER SINCE 1247 ·

A WORD FROM THE SUBPRIOR ...

The week just passed we have celebrated the Solemnity of the Assumption of Our Lady, and it was great to see so many of you at our Masses on what is an important occasion. The 15th of August this year was also an important anniversary for people in South Asia, a day which marked 70 years since partition in India. It's an event that is seldom spoken about, and yet was so difficult and painful for so many people. Watching the documentaries these past few days, I was profoundly struck by the suffering that this event had caused, where neighbours and families were separated from each other – and where people who had been friends were now seen as enemies because of religious and ethnic differences. Atrocities were committed on all sides, and those who were alive at that time still bear the scars of what they lived through so many years later. The horror of what people can do to one another was also once again shown in such a devastating way in Barcelona just a few days ago.

There are many different reasons for the terrible things that people do to one another, but at the heart of it all is our fallen state. Our failure to love each other as we should is rooted in the fall, and in the effect of original sin. It's something that affects us all – we don't have to have committed terrible atrocities to know that each of us is capable of acts which fall short of the love that God calls us to show for him and for each other. That shocking reality is not, thankfully the end of the story, because God has sent us his Son to save us from the power of sin and death.

When we look at history, and in our own times at the damage people can do to one another, we might wonder what we can do to help. We should certainly pray for those who carry out atrocities and for those affected, and do what we can to help support those who are directly affected. But we should also do what we can to cooperate with God's grace working in our own lives; and through prayer, penitential acts, and celebration of the sacraments, to work on leaving behind those actions and habits which damage our relationships with others. Christ has given us the remedies we need to help us work for a better future for humanity – but that work starts with our own lives.

God bless,

Fr Robert

SAFEGUARDING – KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

We remind you once again that Holy Cross is only safe for our children and vulnerable adults if we make it so. We ask each family to ensure their children are supervised at all times, and are accompanied by a trusted and responsible adult known to the child. Please also support us in discouraging children in running and climbing on the premises.

EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS – SEPTEMBER 2018

Our Bishops have announced that a National Eucharistic Congress will be held in Liverpool during September 2018. After the summer holidays, we will begin to make preparations for this important moment, and we will consider how we can enrich our devotion to the Eucharist.

NOTICE BOARD

BAPTISM PREPARATION

If you wish to have your child baptised, please attend one of our baptism preparation sessions. The next is Sunday 6 August after the 10:30am Mass in St Clement's Hall.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CONFIRMATION

Please get in touch with the Priory Office if members of your family wish to celebrate these sacraments.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Couples who are preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony should make an appointment with the Parish Priest in the first instance.

BECOMING CATHOLIC

Any adult who wishes to become a Catholic or receive Confirmation should join our RCIA programme, which begins in the Autumn Term.

VISITING THE SICK

The Faithful who are sick and housebound can arrange a visit from a priest or special minister by calling 0116 252 1501.

FAMILY VISITS

Families who would like a house blessing or a pastoral visit at home, can make arrangements by calling 0116 252 1501

BUILDINGS SURVEY

We have just completed a comprehensive survey of the buildings here at Holy Cross, which are of varying age and design. A comprehensive report has now been received, and in the autumn we hope to be able to draw up a programme for restoring those areas of our buildings that require attention. We hope that this programme of works will guide us across the next five years, and that attention will then be given to a number of outstanding issues.

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

Fr David will be away from Wednesday of this week until the beginning of September. During this time, there will not be Mass at 8am Monday – Friday. We very much hope that normal Mass times will begin again from early September. Thank you for bearing with us during this time of transition. Fr Robert returns early this week.

THE OFFICE AT HOLY CROSS

Mrs Powell is our office administrator, and is very much at the centre of everything that happens at Holy Cross. The list of things she does is enormous, as Holy Cross is a very busy place! In addition to ensuring our accounting information is passed to our main office in Oxford, she manages hall hire, contractors, emails, phone messages, and sacramental registers. Do get in touch with her if she can help in any way!

PARISH OF ST EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, AYLESTONE

The Dominican Fathers at Holy Cross have assumed the pastoral care of the Parish of St Edward the Confessor Aylestone, until the Bishop is able to make permanent arrangements. The late Canon Peter Coyle served faithfully there for many years until his death in August. Please keep the people of the parish there in your prayers at this time.

HOLY CROSS DAY – 17 SEPTEMBER 2017

This year we will mark Holy Cross Day on Sunday 17 September. The Mass at 10:30am will be preceded by a procession of the Relic. Mass will be celebrated by our Provincial, Fr Martin. We will start to make preparations for this very soon.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Our Holy Hour, each Sunday at 6pm
- Organ recitals, first Friday of each month at 1:15pm
- Solemnity of the Assumption, Tuesday 15 August. Holyday of Obligation
- Holy Cross Day – Sunday 17 September

THE DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

Fr David Rocks OP PP *Prior*; Fr Isidore Clarke OP; Fr Fabian Radcliffe OP;
Fr Tony Rattigan OP *Bursar*; Fr Robert Gay OP CC *Subprior*; Fr Matthew Jarvis OP

Office Administrator: *Mrs Rachael Powell* – leicester.admin@english.op.org

Lay University Chaplain: *Mr George Ralph* – george.ralph@english.op.org

Director of Music: *Mr Thomas Keogh* – thomas@thomaskeogh.co.uk

For the Office Administrator, please call **0116 252 1501**

Holy Cross Priory, 45 Wellington Street, LE1 6HW. Tel: 0116 252 1501

For more details, visit: www.holycrossleicester.org

MASS TIMES

Sundays:

8am; 10:30am (sung);
12:30pm (old rite);
7pm

Weekdays:

8am (old rite);
12:30pm; 6:10pm

Saturdays:

8am (old rite);
10am; 12.30pm;
*6:10pm Vigil Mass for
Sunday*

CONFESSION

Saturdays:

10:30-11:30am
5:00-6:00pm

MONEY MATTERS

Last week's collections:

£ 1132.51

(Gift aided: £384.28)

Woodhouse Collection

£ 95.00

(Gift aided: £69.00)

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT!*