

## FINDING MUCH-NEEDED SPACE TO BE WITH GOD IN OUR DAILY LIVES

20th Sunday in Ordinary time ~ 16 August 2020



*Jesus and the Canaanite Woman, by Mattia Preti | public domain | edited [www.stjosephsbrackenridge](http://www.stjosephsbrackenridge)*

### WEEKEND CELEBRATION

This weekend we celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday and the 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time for the weekend Masses.

- + We celebrate this sacred time with God.
- + We continue our prayer for the people of Lebanon.
- + We take time to thank God for Fr Joe McGeehan in our lives.

And we draw inspiration from the Word of God today.

### LEBANON UPDATE

In response to requests from parishioners about the situation in Lebanon, as we continue to pray for Lebanon, a UN update reveals that:

- six hospitals and more than 20 health clinics were damaged, and 120 schools destroyed.
- 'It left 178 people dead, 6,568 injured, and thousands homeless.'
- COVID-19 transmission - 'As of 12 August, 7,413 total cases had been recorded. Fifty per cent of total infections recorded to date have been diagnosed in the past two weeks alone.'
- 'A WFP shipment of 17,500 metric tons of wheat flour is due to arrive at the temporarily operational Port of Beirut. The first wheat flour shipment is due to arrive by 20 August.'
- 'Mobile medical units operated by Amel Association, International Medical Corps, and Caritas have been deployed in several affected areas, to reach the most vulnerable, including the elderly and people with disabilities.'
- Caritas has distributed home appliances and baby items to 40 families, hygiene kits to 133 people, hot meals to 30,000 people and food to 700 people in need.
- WHO delivered trauma and surgical supplies to 'immediately support more than 1,000 trauma interventions and 1,000 surgical interventions'.
- 'Shelter Sector partners, working closely with the Lebanese Red Cross and other partners, have conducted more than 3,500 emergency shelter needs assessments and

distributed 839 shelter kits (including plastic tarpaulins, timber and ironmongery) in affected neighbourhoods.'

- 'UNHCR-run mobile health clinics are providing medicines and health services to those most in need with more than 2,000 people receiving medication for acute and chronic conditions.'
- 'Some 5,000 female hygiene kits have been provided to affected women and girls, following a UNICEF rapid needs assessment. UNICEF is also providing food and water alongside clothes and detergents to 700 children and their caregivers.'
- UNFPA is supporting an estimated 129,000 women and girls displaced by the Beirut explosion, including roughly 4,000 expectant mothers.
- UNICEF has facilitated the logistics and distribution of 10,000 tetanus vaccines, 42 emergency kits and emergency drugs to primary health-care centres in need.

We pray for Lebanon.

**[pause and pray]**

### FR JOE MCGEEHAN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR MINISTRY AMONG US

Bishop Ken wrote to parishes and agencies on Thursday afternoon, saying

*'I bring you the sad news that our brother,  
Fr Joe McGeehan has died this afternoon after some months of uncertain health.  
Joe was ordained in 1963 and has served  
as Parish Priest in Murgon, Birkdale, Gympie and Wavell Heights.  
He will also be well remembered for his work amongst us  
as Director of Continuing Education for priests.  
May he rest in the embrace of our Risen Lord  
whom he has served so well over 57 years of ordained ministry.  
I commend Fr Joe and those closest to him for your prayerful support.'*

In our parish community of St Joseph's and St Anthony's, Joe has led us in Eucharist and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation when I have been away, has opened up the Word of God, joined us and anointed us in the Sacrament of Anointing, been present at some of our social activities including musicals, and listened to us, joked with us and prayed for us. His humility, pastoral caring and experience were there for all of us.

Joe loved sports. He loved the bush and the beach. He loved to read. He would recommend recent books on prayer, scriptural research, theology, pastoral care, liturgy, and the occasional novel to his friends. He loved people.

Let us pause and quietly say to Joe what we didn't have the opportunity to say before. We ask through the grace of God now, that Joe can hear each of us in this space of silence.

**[pause and pray]**

Thank you Joe, for being the person you are.  
As Jesus welcomes you into the fullness of God's love,  
we thank God for you.

In our prayer petitions later, we continue our [prayers for Victoria and New South Wales](#), and for Flemington and Kensington Parishes in Melbourne.

### GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 15:21-28

Important challenges in today's Gospel passage include:

- overcoming barriers of culture, race, sex and tradition
- insights into becoming inclusive
- understanding Mission
- understanding prayer, silence and response

Let us reflect today on prayer, silence and response.  
And for carers for others, there is special significance,

Matthew 15:21-28 begins

*“Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.  
Just then a Canaanite 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.’ “*

### SILENCE AND SPACE BEFORE GOD

We wonder at times about God being silent when we ask for something.

Let us reflect on that sentence. *“But he did not answer her at all.”*

It doesn't say that Jesus didn't hear her and her plea.

Jesus hears her.

Literally the Biblical Greek can read *“But he did not answer her a word”*.

Jesus responded by not saying a spoken word.

His response was wordless.

This gives the space for the disciples to speak

and then this Canaanite woman of courage

to show initiative and approach Jesus.

The disciples relate how she was shouting after them.

The disciples want her sent away because of her shouting after them.

Jesus does not tell her to go away.

The response of Jesus to her shouting is wordless and an opportunity for her.

The second time, she does not shout like before.

She comes and kneels before Jesus and asks *“Lord, help me.”*

His wordless response now leads to opportunities:

- 1) Dialogue with the disciples about his mission.
- 2) Action by the Canaanite woman to come to Jesus, kneel in respect before Jesus and ask Jesus for help. She doesn't mention her daughter again though she seeks her healing. She says Lord, help me.
- 3) Dialogue with the Canaanite woman, this giving her the space to show her faith.
- 4) Jesus proclaiming her faith.
- 5) Jesus healing her daughter.

The Gospel continues:

*"But she 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."*

#### CARING FOR OTHERS AND OURSELVES

We don't need to do all the talking to God.

Sometimes God responds to us in silence, giving us the opportunity and space to come closer.

The Canaanite woman not only has her prayer of healing answered for her daughter, but also time before Jesus for herself. She is affirmed.

For all people who are carers at home or at work, this passage offers insights into caring for ourselves as well before God.

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry

[Readings: <https://universalis.com/Australia/20200816/mass.htm>]



FR GERRY HEFFERAN

[printable version at this link](#)