



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY August 20 & BEYOND

Closer and Closer



Without the proper context, you probably wouldn't conclude from this Sunday's gospel lesson that Jesus is the sign that God's love is always at work in our lives. In it a Canaanite woman comes and begs Jesus to free her daughter from demonic possession. While He does eventually grant her request, He first seems to ignore, humiliate, and insult her. What possible context could there be to explain that? I think

the most helpful is a kind of "spiritual therapy."

By "therapy" I mean correcting a distortion caused by our human experience. For example, an injury to my foot will cause me to change the way I walk until it heals. Emotional trauma certainly creates distortion, but positive experiences can too. Often success in one area of life will lead someone to overestimate their abilities in other areas. While the normal course of life usually corrects these things – injuries heal, egos get deflated – until that happens, the effects spread and become more difficult to correct. Eventually they even distort our perception of reality; our bodies forget the right way to move, our hearts forget how to engage the world. At that point, we're unable to help ourselves, and that's where the gospel lesson picks up.

We need to recognize that the Canaanite woman's suffering has given her an incredible level of resolve. When pagan spirituality couldn't help her daughter, she immediately left her world behind and starts approaching Jesus. Nothing will deter her, she just keeps advancing. In fact, she gives us a perfect picture of the kind of determination we need to have in the spiritual life, and so Jesus is making the most of it while He can, bringing her as close to Him as she's willing to come.

If that sounds manipulative, consider this: once her daughter is healed, that energy will evaporate and she may *never have it again*. Breaking out of dysfunctional patterns is a painful process, and much as we despise suffering, the truth is that we don't move toward Jesus with the same relentless fervor as the Canaanite woman when life is great. Most of us need to be afflicted in our comfort at least as often as we need to be comforted in our affliction. In a very personal way, then, Jesus is continually drawing us each to Him however He can, in whatever way we'll come. This episode ought to remind us that no matter what seems to be going on in our lives, God's love is always at work, even if it's not always pretty.

Father J. D. McQueen II

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: 8:00a Low Mass (Church)
 9:30a Christian Formation (Fireside Room)
 10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Child care is provided at the 8:00a, 10:30a Mass, Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: 9:00a Morning Prayer (St. Mary's Chapel)
 9:30a Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego
www.allsaintschurch.org