

# ORDINARY TIME XX SUNDAY [Year A]

Is 56:1, 6-7; Rom 11:13-15, 29-32; Mt 15:21-28

Homily by Fr. Maraiah

All three readings today speak of the expansive and universal nature of the “Kingdom of God,” in contrast with the theory that salvation was offered first to the Jews and through them alone to the rest of the world. Although God set the Hebrew people apart as His chosen race, He included all nations in His plan for salvation and blessed all the families of the earth in Abraham (Gn 12:1-3).

By declaring through the prophet Isaiah (the first reading), “*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples,*” God reveals the truth that in His eyes there is no distinction among human beings on the basis of race, caste, or color. The long-expected Messianic kingdom was intended not only for the Jews but for all nations as well. Today’s Responsorial Psalm (Ps 67) rejects all types of religious exclusivity: “*Let all the peoples praise You, O God . . . For You judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon the earth, so that Your saving power may be known among all the nations.*” In the second reading, Paul explains that, although the Jews were the chosen people, many of them rejected Jesus as the promised Messiah, and, consequently, God turned to the Gentiles who received mercy through their Faith in Jesus. In the Gospel story, Jesus demonstrates that salvation was meant for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews by healing the daughter of a Gentile woman as a reward for her strong Faith. Thus, Jesus shows that God’s mercy and love are available to all who call out to Him in Faith.

**Life messages: 1) We need to persist in prayer with trustful confidence.** Although the essential parts of prayer are adoration and thanksgiving, the prayer of petition plays a big part in our daily lives. Christ himself has told us

to ask him for these needs: *“Ask and you shall receive.”* Asking with fervor and perseverance proves that we have the “great Faith” we need to receive what Christ wants to grant us in response to our requests. We must realize and remember that we do not always get exactly what we ask for. Rather, God gives us what He knows we really need, what He wants for us, and what is really best for us. As Christians, we also know that our particular request may not always be for our good, or for the final good of the person for whom we are praying. But if the prayer is sincere and persevering, we will always get an answer — one which is better than what we asked for.

**2) We need to pull down our walls of separation and share in the universality of God’s love:** Very often we set up walls which separate us from God and from one another. Today’s Gospel reminds us that God’s love and mercy are extended to all who call on Him in Faith and trust, no matter who they are. In other words, God’s care extends beyond the bounds of race and nation to the hearts of all who live, and God’s House should become a House of Prayer for all peoples. It is therefore fitting that we should pray and work sincerely so that the walls which our pride, intolerance, fear, and prejudice have raised may crumble.