



FATHER SANCTUS OFFER

Faith That Refuses to Give Up

My dear brothers and sisters, Have you ever prayed for something so important that you could not give up? Maybe it was for someone's healing, for a child who was struggling, for peace in your family, or for a situation that seemed impossible to change. You prayed. You waited. You prayed again. And still, nothing seemed to happen.

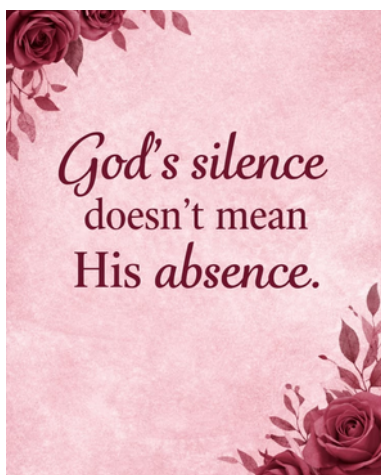
That is where we meet the Canaanite woman in today's Gospel. She comes to Jesus carrying the pain of her daughter. She believes Jesus can help her, so she cries out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David!"

But surprisingly, Jesus does not immediately answer her. Still, she keeps asking. The disciples want to send her away. Still, she stays.

And even when Jesus speaks about the children's bread and the dogs, she refuses to be discouraged. She responds, "Even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters."

In other words, she seems to be saying, "Lord, I know there is enough mercy in you even for me." And Jesus responds, "Woman, great is your faith!" What an extraordinary woman!

She teaches us something important: faith does not always mean receiving an immediate answer. Sometimes faith means continuing to trust when the answer is delayed.



Perhaps someone here today is carrying a prayer that has not yet been answered.

**FAITH ~
Never
gives up**

You have prayed for healing. You have prayed for your marriage or family. You have prayed for a son or daughter. You have prayed for direction in your life. And perhaps you are becoming tired.

The Canaanite woman says to us: Don't give up. Keep praying. Keep trusting. Keep knocking on the door.

But there is another thing worth mentioning that is beautiful in today's readings. It's about the origin of the woman. This woman is a Canaanite. She is considered an outsider. Yet Jesus discovers in this outsider something remarkable: great faith.

And Isaiah tells us in the first reading, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." I love that image. God's house has a wide door. Sometimes we are the ones who make that doorway too narrow.

We decide who belongs and who doesn't. We judge people because of their background, nationality, culture, appearance, or past. We create boundaries. But God sees differently. Funny enough, the person we consider an outsider may already be very close to God's heart.

So today, the Canaanite woman leaves us with two simple lessons.

First: Don't give up on God. God may not answer according to our timetable or exactly as we expect, but God's silence does not mean God's absence. And secondly, don't give up on people. Make room at the table. Open the door wider. Put judgment aside.

Jesus stretched out his arms on the Cross for all humanity. It's important to remember that God's mercy is bigger than the boundaries we create.

May the Lord give us the persistent faith of the Canaanite woman, her courageous love, and hearts wide enough to welcome everyone whom God welcomes.

Father Sanctus Ibe