

Dear Friends:

All what we have learned Jesus did like curing, healing, forgiving, liberating, teaching, somehow impress us, captivate us, inspire us and motivate us to believe him and his promise of salvation. But today's gospel passage from Matthew 15 gives us the impression of some contradiction. Why did Jesus wait so long to respond to this woman's request? Why using this language of humiliation? Why not to pay attention to her daughter suffering?

I think that this is a good opportunity to meditate about the meaning of miracles, exorcisms and good deeds of Jesus. Are they humanitarian actions or philanthropic expressions from a good man? If they are, then we have no explanations for today's gospel passage. But because Jesus miracles, exorcisms and good deeds are signs of the Kingdom of God, then we may understand that Jesus intervention in someone's life is more than a healing or a curing, it is about to save the person from condemnation, it is an encouragement to that person to get into a covenant with God.

When Jesus sent his disciples the first time (Matt 10), he said: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel". Jesus, who gives power to make miracles, says to his disciples that first is to let the people of God know that God is near and that, it was time to renew their covenant with God.

When we talk about the Canaanite woman in the gospel, the miracle is not the goal itself, but an instrument that Jesus wants to use to invite her to get into a covenant with God. After the woman's persistence, Jesus says to her: "It is not right to take the food of the children (Israel) and throw it to the dogs (gentiles)" and her responds was: "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters" indicating with humility that she was not Israelite but she was willing to accept whatever God will give her.

This is very important because the majority of us, using the same biblical language, are originally gentiles, and we have been fed from the table of Judaism, we have received the bread from Israel, we have received that gift. Jesus was very clear on it: "the salvation comes from the Jews, and Jesus was Jewish.

When the woman's humility and faith connect with the covenant then, the miracle is done, the exorcism is performed and the peace is experienced.

Miracles are instruments of God's revelations to his people Israel, and later were extended to all human being by Jesus Christ. It was not Jesus' intention to show his power through miracles but to reveal God's calling. Now, we often ask for a miracle for us or for someone else, and we want to be answered immediately. We ask one miracle after another forgetting to renew and reconnect with the covenant God has made with us in Jesus Christ.

We all should be away from all type of arrogance and pride in our religious practices because we all are that Canaanite woman, we all are foreigners, we are all from outside who thanks Jesus have been welcomed to join the covenant. So, if we have been invited to the table of Salvation, that indeed we participate as Catholics, who are we to exclude others?

It was by faith that the woman's daughter was healed. It is by faith in Jesus' Covenant that our world could heal from the enormous ambition of power, selfishness and materialism we see today. It is by faith that our society can get free from violence, crimes, abortion, discrimination, racism and other perversions. We have a lot to learn from the Canaanite woman from Matthew 15: Humility, Perseverance, Love for her daughter not matter what and Faith in the Saviour.

After this short review about one of Jesus' miracles, what we should remember is that the Covenant God had established with Israelites and gentiles through Jesus is available to all who have a personal encounter we are able to testify. This renew and reconnection with the covenant I mentioned before is our spiritual experience with God, like many saints had in their life's time. This spiritual experience make us witnesses of God's miracles; ability that many believers have difficulties to belief. Now, go back to Matthew 15 and see how much we can learn from the Canaanite woman.

Best wishes and Blessings for all members of St. Columbkille family wherever you may be at this time.

Father Lorenzo