



# Celebrate

**Sunday, September 5, 2021**  
**15th Sunday after Pentecost**

*James tells us to stop showing favoritism in the assembly, treating the rich visitor with more honor than the poor one. Jesus himself seems to show partiality in his first response to the Syrophenician woman in today's gospel. Was he testing her faith in saying Gentiles don't deserve the goods meant for God's children? Or was he speaking out of his human worldview, but transcended those limits when she took him by surprise with her reply? Either way, the story tells us that God shows no partiality. Everyone who brings a need to Jesus is received with equal honor as a child and heir.*

## Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, throughout the ages you transform sickness into health and death into life. Open us to the power of your presence, and make us a people ready to proclaim your promises to the whole world, through Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord. Amen.

## First Reading

*These verses are a word of hope to the exiles in Babylon. Isaiah 34 portrays God's vengeance on Edom, Israel's age-old enemy, which makes the path from Babylon to Zion safe for the exiles' return. The desert itself will flow with water to give drink to the returning exiles.*

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you."

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

[Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice,

<sup>25</sup>but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. <sup>26</sup>Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin.

She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup>He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." <sup>28</sup>But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." <sup>29</sup>Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." <sup>30</sup>So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

## Second Reading

*Faithful Christians do not show partiality to the rich and powerful of the world, especially at the expense of the poor and weak. Likewise, faith does not pay mere lip service to God's will. Instead, a living Christian faith expresses itself in acts of compassion and mercy for those in need.*

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? <sup>2</sup>For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, <sup>3</sup>and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there,"

all of it. <sup>11</sup>For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup>So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup>For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.]

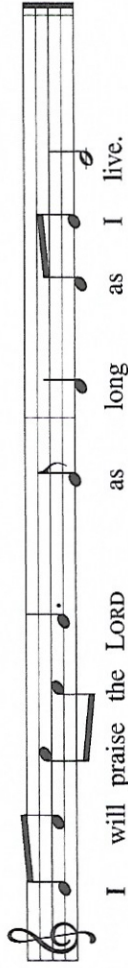
<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? <sup>17</sup>So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

## Gospel

**Mark 7:24-37**

*In Mark's gospel, encounters with women usually signify turning points in Jesus' ministry. Here, a conversation with a Syrophenician woman marks the beginning of his mission to the Gentiles.*

<sup>31</sup>Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup>They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup>He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup>Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." <sup>35</sup>And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup>Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup>They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."



Hal-<sup>1</sup> lelujah!

Praise the LORD, <sup>1</sup>O my soul!

<sup>2</sup>**I will praise the LORD as long <sup>1</sup>as I live;**

<sup>3</sup>**I will sing praises to my God while I <sup>1</sup>have my being.**

<sup>4</sup>Put not your <sup>1</sup>trust in rulers,

in mortals in whom there <sup>1</sup>is no help.

<sup>5</sup>**When they breathe their last, they re-<sup>1</sup>turn to earth,**

**and in that day <sup>1</sup>their thoughts perish. <sup>R</sup>**

<sup>6</sup>Happy are they who have the God of Jacob <sup>1</sup>for their help,

whose hope is in the <sup>1</sup>LORD their God;

<sup>7</sup>**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that <sup>1</sup>is in them;**

**who keeps promis-<sup>1</sup>es forever;**

<sup>8</sup>who gives justice to those who are oppressed,

and food to <sup>1</sup>those who hunger.

The LORD sets the <sup>1</sup>captive free.

<sup>9</sup>**The LORD opens the eyes of the blind;**

**the LORD lifts up those who <sup>1</sup>are bowed down;**

**the LORD <sup>1</sup>loves the righteous. <sup>R</sup>**

<sup>10</sup>The LORD cares <sup>1</sup>for the stranger;

the LORD sustains the orphan and widow,

but frustrates the way <sup>1</sup>of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup>**The LORD shall <sup>1</sup>reign forever,**

**your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. <sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! <sup>R</sup>**

## Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Holy One, you bring your people together in worship. Enliven your church. Guide all evangelists, preachers, prophets, and missionaries who seek to share your love through word and deed. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

You provide water for thirsty ground and sunshine to feed hungry plants. Bless all who advocate for healthy forests, unpolluted air, and clean waterways. Inspire all people to show care for the world you have made. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

You show no partiality. Increase justice in all nations. Encourage leaders and governments to work with one another for the good of our common world. (*Especially as we celebrate Labor/Labour*)

Day,) unite us in seeking the health, safety, and dignity of all. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

You accompany those who are most in need. Shelter all fleeing violence or persecution, protect any who are in danger, and sustain them through uncertain and unstable times. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

You support the work of your disciples. Continue to nurture the leadership and ministries of this congregation (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You embrace all who have died in the faith and brought them into your glorious presence. We thank you for their example and rejoice in their lives. Lord, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

**Monday** Isaiah 38:10-20. **Tuesday** Hebrews 12:3-13. **Wednesday** Matthew 17:14-21. **Thursday** (commemoration of Peter Claver), priest, missionary to Colombia, 1654) Psalm 116:1-9. **Friday** James 2:17-26. **Saturday** Matthew 21:23-32. **16th Sunday after Pentecost** Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 116:1-9; James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38.

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