

National Vocations Awareness Week 2011

Homily Notes

August 14th 2011 – 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Second Reading

- *God never takes back his gifts or revokes his choice*
 - God makes a claim on us. God has chosen us through baptism. This choice is never revoked. Baptism leaves an indelible mark upon us. God calls some to further consecration – through the sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders and also through religious profession.

Gospel

- *The Canaanite woman pleads with Christ on behalf of her daughter*
 - The priest, through his ordination, shares in the ministerial priesthood of Christ. Christ is always making intercession for us before the throne of God. This is both honour and burden for the priest; an honour to carry the sorrows and joys of God's people, their fractured holiness and their petitions to God especially through the celebration of the Mass. It is burden too as the priest helps his people shoulder the burdens of life
 - Consecrated life demands also of sisters and brothers that they also be ones who pray and make intercession. They show the People of God how important it is to pray as well as to do, as St Benedict said "*ora et labora*", to pray and to work.
- The Canaanite woman showed three virtues necessary for all who follow Christ and especially for those who respond to the vocation of ordained and consecrated life
 - The Canaanite woman shows great **love**, which comes across in her self-forgetfulness. She was so concerned for her daughter, than she was even willing to make a humiliating spectacle out of herself, tagging along behind a Jewish rabbi in public, shouting to get his attention.
 - Her **faith** comes across in how she addresses Jesus. She calls him "Lord" and "Son of David." Although she was a Canaanite; she knew about the Jewish religion and accepted God's promise to send a Messiah. And when he finally stops to listen to her, she falls on her knees and does him homage - she knows she is in God's presence. She believed in Jesus, so much so, in fact, that Jesus himself compliments her on her faith – in stark contrast to the faith Jesus usually finds in Israel.
 - Her **humility** comes across in the way she makes her request. She didn't come to him burning with anger at God for allowing her innocent daughter to be tormented by demons. She understood that miracles were undeserved gifts from God, just like existence itself. This humble attitude strengthened her, enabling her to absorb the Lord's initial rejection, and then come right back with another petition.