

Background on the Gospel Reading

Today we move ahead in our reading of Matthew’s Gospel. Last week we read about [Jesus walking on the water](#) and the disciples’ confession of faith that Jesus is the Son of God. If we were reading Matthew’s entire Gospel, we would have read about Jesus’ debate with the Pharisees about Jewish purity laws. Jesus argues that it is not what goes into us that makes us unclean; he is referring to the strict Jewish dietary rules. Instead our words and our actions—what comes out of us—make us unclean because they emerge from a heart that is unclean.

Knowing about Jesus’ debate with the Pharisees helps us to understand today’s Gospel. In fact the story heightens the surprise and shock we feel as we hear Jesus’ exchange with the Canaanite woman. The woman, who is not Jewish, approaches Jesus, requesting that he heal her demon-possessed daughter. At first Jesus ignores her; he says nothing. The disciples ask Jesus to send her away, and Jesus agrees, remarking that he was sent to minister to the Jews alone.

The woman persists, paying homage to Jesus, and yet Jesus denies her request again. He even insults her, using a Jewish word of derision for Gentiles, “dog.” But the woman cleverly turns Jesus’ insult into an affirmation of faith. Only then does Jesus grant her request and heal her daughter.

Jesus’ unresponsiveness to this woman may strike us as uncharacteristic or shocking. Yet in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus’ ministry is directed primarily to the people of Israel. At only a very few points, such as the one found in today’s Gospel, do we find Jesus anticipating the later Christian ministry to the rest of the world.

Behind Matthew’s text we can hear this early Christian community’s struggle to understand how God’s selection of Israel is consistent with two events: Israel’s rejection of Jesus and the Gentiles’ acceptance of Jesus. Just as Jesus was surprised by the faith expressed by the Canaanite woman, so too the first Christians were surprised that the Gentiles would receive the salvation God offered through Christ. In today’s second reading from Paul’s letter to the Romans, we hear the apostle Paul considering this same concern.

The faith that the Canaanite woman expresses is an affirmation of and confidence in God’s abundant mercy. Yes, salvation comes through Israel, but it overflows for the benefit of all.



ST. MONICA PARISH

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PASTOR: **Rev. Mark Bautista**  
 DEACON: **Wilbur Victoria**

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS**  
 Monday – Friday  
**9:30 am – 1 pm / 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm**

**MASS SCHEDULES**  
 WEEKDAYS: **9:00 am**  
 SATURDAYS: **9:00 am & 5:00 pm**  
 SUNDAYS: **9:00 am, 11:00 am**  
 & **4:00 pm (YVR)**

**CONFESSION SCHEDULES**  
 SATURDAYS: **9:45 am—10:30 am**  
 20 minutes before Daily Mass

**BAPTISM every Saturday @ 11am**  
**WEDDING** – Please call the Parish Office  
 at least 6 months in advance.  
**FUNERAL, HOUSE BLESSING, SICK CALL**  
 Please call the Parish Office.

WEDNESDAY: **Perpetual Help Novena**  
 after 9am Mass  
 FRIDAY: **Holy Hour after 9am Mass**  
 1st SATURDAY: **Rosary for Vocation**  
 after 9am Mass

(above schedule effective September 1)

August 20, 2023

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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**Liturgy of the Word**  
*Today and every day we celebrate the good-  
 ness of God.*

In the first reading, Isaiah tells the people to observe what is right and do what is just, for God’s salvation is about to come for all who hold to his covenant. Paul writes that he is the apostle to the Gentiles, for God has delivered them too. In the Gospel, Jesus heals the daughter of a Canaanite woman because the woman’s faith is great.

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**Today’s Readings:**  
*1st: Isaiah 56.1, 6-7*  
*Psalm: 67*  
*2nd: Romans 11.13-15, 29-32*  
*Gospel: Matthew 15.21-28*



Matthew 15, 21-28

**A Stewardship Moment**

*“He said, ‘For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.’ -Romans 11:29*

God has a special mission in mind for each of us. He has given us the gifts we need to accomplish that mission. We are called to be good stewards by using those gifts to do the work that He has planned for each of us. If we deny our gifts or fail to use them as God calls us to use them, then some part of His work will be left undone. Each of us has a part in God’s salvation plan.

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<b>PROJECT ADVANCE as of 14 August 2023</b>	
Parish Goal: \$75,000.00   Donations: \$17,200.00 (23%)	
Participation: 36 of 374 families (10%)	
<b>Mass Intentions   Aug 20 - 26, 2023</b>	
Mon, Aug 21 - Tony/Sally Papilla (INT)	Thu, Aug 24 - Diego Salacup (+)
Tue, Aug 22 - Elizabeth Jubida (+)	Fri, Aug 25 - Nicetrato Elvina (+)
Wed, Aug 23 - Arthur Mann (INT)	Sat, Aug 26 - Isabelle Pineda (INT)

**Prayer to St. Michael**

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle; be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do you, O prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and the other evil spirits who prowl about the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

**The Pope’s Prayer Intention for August**

*For World Youth Day:* We pray the World Youth Day in Lisbon will help young people to live and witness the Gospel in their own lives.

<b>Aug 22</b> —The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary
<b>Aug 27</b> —St Monica , <b>Aug 28</b> —St Augustine
<b>Aug 29</b> —The Passion of Saint John the Baptist

Save the Date

76th Anniversary

ST. MONICA PARISH

»» LET'S DO POTLUCK LUNCH ««

BRING YOUR BEST DISH TO THE TABLE

Let's Welcome

REVEREND FATHER MARK BAUTISTA

ALL PARISHIONERS ARE INVITED FOR A POTLUCK CELEBRATION

27 August 2023

12:00 pm

St. Monica Parish Hall

12011 Woodhead Rd, Richmond, BC