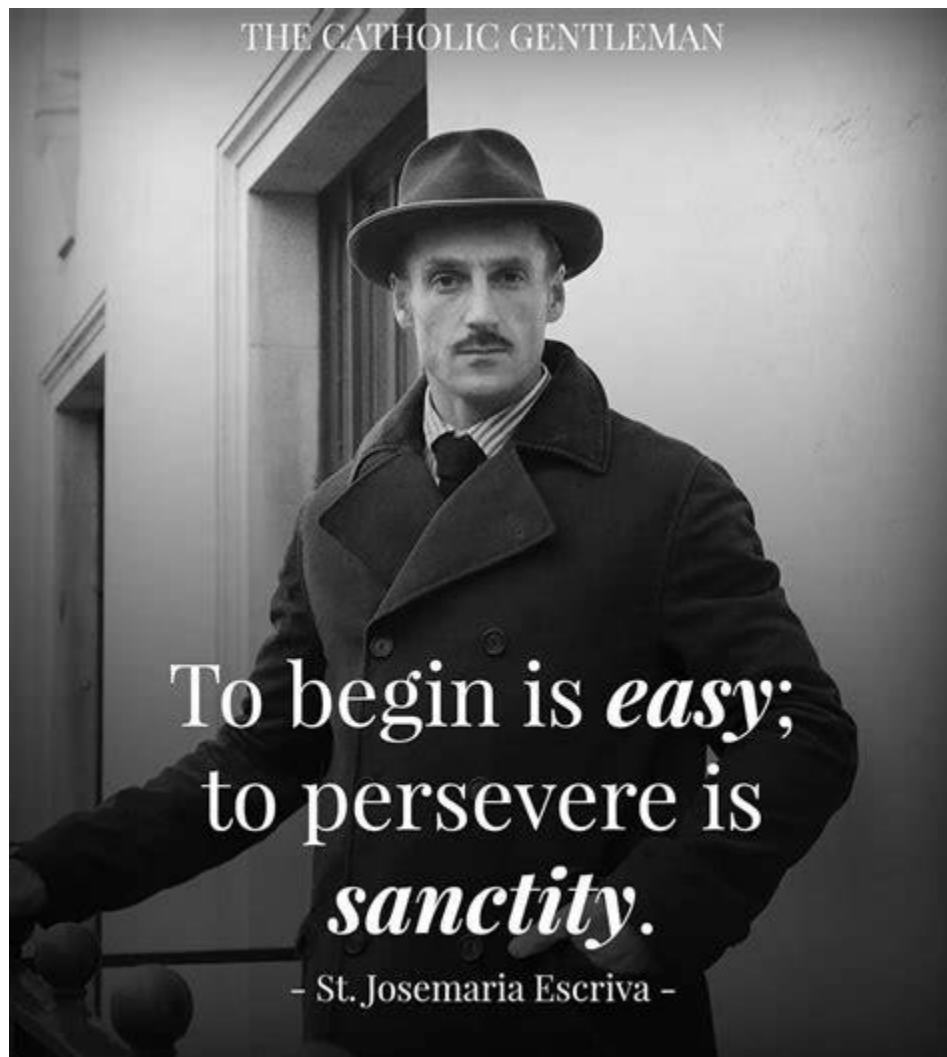


**FROM FATHER JOHN:** "For those with faith, no evidence is necessary; for those without it, no evidence will suffice." ~ St Thomas Aquinas



On Wednesday, the gospel passage from daily mass was from Matthew's gospel (Mt 15: 21-28) and it was the passage about the Canaanite woman who approached our Lord Jesus and asked him to heal her daughter.

***"At that time Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, 'Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon.'***

***But he did not say a word in answer to her. His disciples came and asked him, 'Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us.' He said in reply, 'I was***

***sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But the woman came and did him homage, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He said in reply, 'It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.'***

***She said, 'Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.' Then Jesus said to her in reply, 'O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed from that hour."***

Oftentimes, we struggle with the part of this gospel reading where our Lord Jesus responds to the Canaanite woman by saying, ***'It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.'*** This lady is asking, begging the Lord for help and he seems to respond in a harsh and dismissive way.

I don't think that our Lord's response was harsh or dismissive. After all, our Lord knew he would help the woman before she even approached him. I believe that his response was educational rather than harsh or dismissive. We can learn an important lesson about what it takes to practice our faith and to grow in our spiritual lives from the Canaanite woman and her interaction with our Lord Jesus.

An interesting thing this passage is that when the Canaanite woman called out to our Lord Jesus saying *"Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David!"* she is publicly acknowledging our Lord Jesus' identity before any of the disciples did so publicly. The Canaanite woman goes to the Lord in her need, she knows that without his help, her daughter's cause is hopeless, and she persists even when Our Lord Jesus seems to put up a roadblock. Even though she was not successful in her first attempt, she did not give up, she kept seeking the Lord's help.

We see that she has unshakable faith, and her faith clearly touched our Lord Jesus. Her story serves as a profound example for us today. It is an example of the kind of faith we need to cling to, the kind of faith that allows us to keep our focus upon our God who loves us and will always be with us. Our Lord Jesus said that faith can move mountains. This woman's faith certainly moved our Lord.

What she did was she persevered in her faith. She never lost sight of who Jesus was and she trusted Him even when he rebuked her.

Pope St. Gregory the Great once wrote about the necessity to persevere in our faith. He used Mary Magdalene, rather than the Canaanite woman, as the example of persevering in the faith. He wrote:

“When Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and did not find the Lord’s body, she thought it had been taken away and so informed the disciples. After they came and saw the tomb, they too believed what Mary had told them. The text then says: The disciples went back home, and it adds: but Mary wept and remained standing outside the tomb.

We should reflect on Mary’s attitude and the great love she felt for Christ; for though the disciples had left the tomb, she remained. She was still seeking the one she had not found, and while she sought she wept; burning with the fire of love, she longed for him who she thought had been taken away. And so it happened that the woman who stayed behind to seek Christ was the only one to see him. For perseverance is essential to any good deed, as the voice of truth tells us: Whoever perseveres to the end will be saved.”

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

