

## A Message from the Dean:

I want to say something that comes straight from today's Gospel reading, but is a bit different from the kind of thing I normally put in the Bible notes.

I find Matthew 15.21-28 one of the most exciting and hope giving passages in the New Testament.

As he travels in a borderland, Jesus knows he is going to bump into strangers. And he does. Indeed the woman that he meets is someone he is absolutely forbidden to have anything to do with by every social and religious convention. At first Jesus manages this and refuses even to answer. We read this as rude when in fact Jesus is just doing exactly what he is meant to do in Jewish tradition, and the disciples are following the same rules in trying to get rid of her.

When Jesus does talk to her, he effectively says "this has nothing to do with me". She is kneeling and pleading for help and then in quick fire insults, Jesus calls her a dog, and she responds with the immortal line "Even the dogs eat the crumbs.." And straight away Jesus heals her daughter.

This is extraordinarily moving and has a direct lesson for us – our country and our world. We often struggle with difference, particularly about colour, race, faith, culture, gender, nationality, language. We see Jesus seeking to stick by the strict conventions of his culture. But the Canaanite woman – a despised foreigner worshipping alien gods – turns out to be the one who can speak the truth and break down the dividing wall.

The tragedies of Beirut, South Sudan, northern Nigeria, and – if we are honest with ourselves – many of the realities we are simply all too used to in our own culture – arise from our struggles to recognise that difference is a gift; that the other enriches us; that we can step into a bigger room together.

This is not about Brexit or Scottish independence even Black Lives Matter and migrant boats in the Channel. It concerns our common humanity, made in the image and likeness of God.



### Contact Us:

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## Pray with Us:

Pray for the work of all Authorised Lay Preachers in our Diocese.

Pray for Chelmsford Community Church, Melbourne.

Pray for the Scottish Episcopal Church and The Most Revd Mark Strange, Primus.

Please pray for those who are unwell including Jean Cooper, Rita James, Winnie Towers, Jill Withams and all those in need of our prayers.

Pray for Elizabeth Snowden (Archdeacon of Chelmsford) and her family, in the loss of Elizabeth's husband Geoff.

## Daily Gospel Readings for this week, to use in your daily prayer:

Monday: Matthew 19. 16-22

Tuesday: Matthew 19. 23-end

Wednesday: Matthew 20. 1-16

Thursday: Matthew 22. 1-14

Friday: Matthew 22. 34-40

Saturday: Matthew 23. 1-12

**Interfaith Cricket Match  
Family Fun Day**

**Chelmsford Mosque**      **Chelmsford Cathedral**

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August at 2pm**  
Willingale Cricket Club  
The Street,  
Willingale, CM5 0SJ

Please bring your own picnic.  
(A shared, outdoor buffet of individually wrapped food & drinks will be available too)  
Food donations welcome

**JOIN THE FUN!**

For info, contact organisers:  
Sidra Naeem (Mosque Representative) [sidra\\_n@yahoo.com](mailto:sidra_n@yahoo.com)  
Ivor Moody (Cathedral Representative) [ivor.moody@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk](mailto:ivor.moody@chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk)

**CHELMSFORD MUSLIM SOCIETY**

## Study with Us:

### Study Notes on the Sunday Gospel: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Romans 11.1-2a, 29-32

Ps 67

Matthew 15.21-28



### Let all the peoples praise you, O God!

God's plan of salvation is for all people. The loving Spirit of God is poured into the whole of creation and rests within everyone. This truth is revealed throughout Scripture and is a message of hope for all times.

In the letter to the Romans (**Second Reading**), Paul teaches that God is faithful to his promises and will never take back the gifts he has so lovingly and freely given to all people. God's mercy is for all of humanity.

This universal vision is echoed in both the response and the verses of the **Psalm**. The light of God's love shines upon all people of every tribe and nation. This is a text that speaks to our times, reminding us of our common humanity, bound together by the love and blessings of God.

In the **Gospel**, we witness what at first seems an uncharacteristically harsh response from Jesus to a desperately worried mother. In this exchange, a foreign pagan woman with a daughter troubled by an evil spirit approaches him directly for help. She has so much faith in Jesus that she even reveals a truth about him that his own disciples have yet to recognise. Jesus's initial rebuff to her cry for help, and her unwavering faith in him, offers an opportunity for him to teach his disciples that God's healing love is available for all people, no matter what their race or religion may be.

### Further notes on Matthew 15.21-28:

After a discussion with his disciples on ritual cleanliness and uncleanness, Jesus goes with them towards Tyre and Sidon.

#### *The region of Tyre and Sidon*

These were two Phoenician towns in present-day Southern Lebanon. Tyre was 40 miles North West of Capernaum, Sidon 60 miles in the same direction, and the towns were 26 miles apart. It is Gentile – that is non Jewish – territory, where people worshipped Phoenician gods.

#### *A Canaanite woman from that district*

Canaanites were ancient enemies of the Jews. A thousand years before, they were living on the Promised Land where Joshua led the Hebrews. God had ordered the Israelites to destroy them (Deuteronomy 20: 17). The woman needs to overcome ethnic, cultural, political, gender and religious prejudices.

#### *Son of David, have pity on me*

Although a pagan foreigner, she is able to use Jewish vocabulary in addressing Jesus.

#### *My daughter is tormented by a devil*

Lack of medical knowledge led people to attribute mental illness to demons or evil spirits.

*Continued on next page*

*The woman was kneeling at his feet*

This is a significant detail: it is the position someone would adopt in front of a King, and supports her calling Jesus 'Son of David'. People kneeling or bowing low in Matthew's Gospel are also linked with healings (8: 2–the cure of a leper, or 9: 18 – the official's daughter brought back to life).

*It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house dogs.*

In the context of the time, this exchange between Jesus and the woman is not perhaps as shocking as it seems to us. It is typical of the kind of wit admired in the Near East, where the ability to match riddle with riddle and insult with insult was greatly admired. It can be seen as good humour rather than theological debate, but it is biting nonetheless.

*You have great faith*

This is the only time in Matthew's Gospel that someone's faith is called great – and therefore very significant that Jesus addresses it a non-Jew. Earlier on, Jesus was regretting Peter's 'little faith' (14: 31)

Let us, too, pray for an outpouring of the kind of faith the woman reveals to us. May we be able to recognise the spirit of God in all people, and may we unite in living out God's covenant of love and justice in all that we do.



**Cathedral Eucharist 10.30am on Sundays:** We are delighted that the Cathedral is now open for public worship on Sundays and you are invited to join us for the Cathedral Eucharist at 10.30am. Please note there is no longer a requirement to reserve a place/book a ticket for Sunday's 10.30am Eucharist service. Following the latest Church of England guidance, it is now expected that all visitors to the Cathedral, for worship or private prayer, wear a facemask.

**Junior Church** is also back in Guy Harlings Garden. Please click on the link below to book in as numbers are currently limited in order to comply with government guidelines. You are very welcome to join Jean for some fun activities. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/chelmsford-cathedral-30658868236>

**Book Group** – This month we are reading “My Name is Asher Lev” by Chaim Potok, a novel about a young Hasidic artist. We will be meeting via Zoom to discuss the book on Monday September 7th at 7.30. All are welcome to join us – email [sallydilley@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sallydilley@tiscali.co.uk) for more information.

**The Friends of Chelmsford Cathedral:** Due to the current situation, rather than hold our AGM via ZOOM, The Winter Festival and AGM has been postponed until Saturday 6th February 2021 when hopefully, we will be able to hold our normal meeting followed by tea. We had a very successful mulled wine & mince pie event earlier in the year and were looking forward to our strawberry tea, but this of course had to be cancelled. If you would like to join The Friends, please contact the secretary Jan Goodman: email: [goodmans99@btinternet.com](mailto:goodmans99@btinternet.com) tel: 01245 500347

On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August at 7pm (not in the afternoon as previously advertised), there will be a summer party in the garden of Guy Harling's for members of the Cathedral's fellowship groups and Breakfast with the Bible. Partners are welcome too along with members of the Cathedral community (including on-line members) who would like to know a little more about the autumn programmes planned. In these days of Covid-19 and social distancing, everyone is asked to bring their own food, drink and a chair if possible. Entrance to the garden will be through the carpark only. The barrier will be open.

**To commemorate VJ Day**, this Saturday (15<sup>th</sup>) there will be a special service at 6am, led by piper Jonathan Swan and live streamed on our Face Book page. For those of you who don't usually see 6am, it will be available on our YouTube channel later that morning with a link from the Church at Home page of the website.

The date for the postponed **annual meeting** has been confirmed as Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September. It will follow on from the Sunday service and will also be live streamed. It is anticipated that it will be finished by 12 noon. The minutes of the last meeting and agenda will on the website by the end of August. These can be accessed from the annual report link at the bottom of the home page (in blue) under 'Useful Links'. All documents will be displayed in the Cathedral, as usual, two weeks before the meeting.

**Bellringers** traditionally ring in times of celebration and commemorations as well as for Services and Weddings. The Cathedral Bellringers have, like everyone else, not been able to practice or ring for Services for several months during lockdown, but now that a Sunday service is being held in the Cathedral, the Bellringers, following the advice of The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, and the Church of England Recovery Group, have begun socially distanced bellringing. In practice this means that we can ring a few of our 12 bells, usually about four or five, in family groups, adhering to social distancing, strict cleaning and hand sanitising, wearing face coverings, and limiting the time we ring for to just 15 minutes. We are glad to be back on the tower and reminding everyone what day of the week it is!

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August sees the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ Day and the end of the second world war. Bellringers traditional ring to mark such events, and we were unable to do so for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day back in May. However, with the permission of the Dean, ensuring that the same band of bellringers will be ringing for both Saturday and Sunday service the next day, we will ring five of the Cathedral bells, starting shortly after 11am to mark this occasion. Those that gave their ultimate sacrifice will be remembered and we hope for continued peace.

