

August 19-20, 2017
The Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Isaiah 56:1-7 Romans 11:13-32 Matthew 15:21-28

Secure within our self-defined human 'TRIBES', we sometimes get tangled up in 'club mentalities', thinking God primarily loves/cares for the members of OUR 'club'. This 'club' might be defined only as Roman Catholics or only Catholics who worship a particular way (as we do) or only Christians or only citizens of the United States or only people who subscribe to our form of government or people of our preferred genetic or gender or orientation or however else we might erroneously minimize God. This weekend's Scriptures tweak us to 'get-over ourselves' and remember that God is free to do whatever God wants. Isaiah reminds us that God is interested in calling any/all to himself, regardless of their backgrounds; Paul prompts the Gentiles of Rome (and now most of us who would be considered contemporary Gentiles) to be grateful for the Jewish hierarchy's rejection of Jesus which made it possible for them to be welcomed into the newly growing Christian faith; Matthew retells the feisty encounter of Jesus with a Canaanite woman (someone not of the Jewish CLUB) who seeks healing for her daughter...to the dismay of Jesus' disciples who see her as being an outsider and not worthy of Jesus' mercy. Despite some strong verbal exchanges in which Jesus implicitly calls the woman 'a dog', her willingness to reach beyond the Club boundaries gains her the healing she seeks for her child...and reminds us that God's power and mercy is not limited to whatever clubs we think have an automatic IN with God. Striving to see people as Jesus sees them, what are our points of struggle? Are we dismayed to think that our 'club' might not be the only people loved by God? Are we offended to think that God might think outside of whatever 'box' in which we have grown up and within which we now define ourselves? Are we in any way challenged to view the world differently; to look at society as Jesus did? Catholics used to tell an ill-formed joke about newly arrived souls in heaven being led around by St. Peter and being shushed when they went past a certain area because that was where the Baptists were and they thought they were the only ones there..... now a-days, all sorts of people tell the same joke but with the subtle change in that the people who think they are the only ones there are Catholics. Have you perhaps gotten the subtle inference here that Jesus is NOT a club....and rules, handshakes or doctrines may not determine with whom Jesus will have a relationship?

With August slipping away, like sand between our fingers, thank you for sharing this weekend with our Santa Clara community. St. Francis School is regrouping for another academic year, as are other campuses, please be mindful of the traffic surrounding both St. Francis and other schools as parents resume their carpools and drop-off and pick-up routines. The Bulletin has further information about our own faith Formation programs for children, youth and adults....please take a copy home and peruse it. Even though school schedules are resuming, Summer continues until September 21st....so keep squeezing as much of the season as you can from these remaining weeks....while also remembering that you are loved. FKB