



Jesus, again, doesn't give in or give her what she's seeking. He says, **"It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs"** (Mt 15:26). Jesus' point is that dogs are not part of the family. They aren't the children to whom Jesus was sent. This is culture shock to our 21<sup>st</sup> century western civilization. Until very recent times dogs were bred for work, for power, for strength, and speed, etc. My wife told me about a science class she took in college where the professor showed a picture of how dogs are bred today: tiny little lap animals with big heads and big eyes – looking just like human babies. It's natural law. Despite being a culture that doesn't want the responsibility to raise however many babies our Lord provides, natural law still presides. We can't get away from the desire to have children. So we substitute it with lap dogs. I digress.

Jesus' point, though, again, by calling the woman a dog, is that dogs are not part of the family. Dogs are not the people of God whom Jesus came to save. Most amazingly the woman accepts this! She responds in faith saying, **"Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table"** (Mt 15:27). Jesus came to save God's people of Israel. That was his primary mission. But the woman confesses that God loves all people. While accepting that she was not part of the family, she knew God loved her. She held God to God's standard.

This Sunday is *Reminiscere* Sunday, the first word of the Introit, which means "remember." The Christian goes to God in faith, holding God to His promises: **"remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been of old"** (Ps 25:6) as we prayed responsively earlier. When God tells *us* to remember something, we are told to remember the promises God has made that are still binding to us. When we pray in faith for God to remember, we are holding God to those same promises, trusting in faith that He will remain faithful!

Formal, informal, structured or from the heart, the Gospel reading is not teaching us one way or another to pray, but instead to pray in sincere faith. Like the Canaanite woman, we are to trust God to help us when we are in the hour of deepest need as we sang in the Sermon Hymn. Sometimes, all the energy you may have is simply to say, "Lord, help me." The Lord doesn't hear or answer your prayer based on how well you craft your words, or how formal or informal you pray them. He hears and answers prayers because of the merits of His Son, Jesus. He hears and answers prayers because of His grace and His mercy. Pray in faith because God loves you. Don't think for a second that you can manipulate God with the right words or if you pray enough times. Pray in faith. Pray and trust that He will answer. Trust that He will remember His mercy. Pray knowing He wants to be caught just like when Jacob wrestled with God. Vicar is going to preach a fantastic sermon on Wednesday on the Old Testament reading from Genesis 32, so I don't want to steal his thunder, but don't think for a second that Jacob wins the wrestling match because he's superior to God. God wants to be caught. He wants you to say, "Lord, remember your promises and keep them for me. I need you" or to use the simple words of the woman, "Lord, help me." He wants to help. He's here to help. Whatever you're bearing, He's here to deliver you. He's here to save. He remembers His promises. In Jesus' name, Amen.