Readings + 12th Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 20 A + August 16, 2026

Prayer of the Day

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

First Reading Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

1 Thus says the LORD:
Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come,
and my deliverance be revealed.
6 And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to the LORD, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be the LORD's servants,
all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it,
and hold fast my covenant—
7 these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.
8 Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.

Psalmody Psalm 67

May God be merciful to us and bless us; may the light of God's face shine upon us.

Let your way be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations on earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has brought forth its increase; God, our own God, has blessed us.

May God give us blessing, and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

Second Reading Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

Paul writes: 1 I ask, then, has God rejected the chosen people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected the people whom God foreknew.

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so also they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. 32 For God has imprisoned all in disobedience in order to be merciful to all.

Holy Gospel Matthew 15:21-28

Matthew and Mark have these first ten verses, about the same length, but with different details (e.g., no blind leading the blind in Mark). And only Matthew and Mark tell this story of a foreign woman who seeks help from Jesus. What's interesting is that Matthew adds that Jesus praises the woman's faith.

[10 Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: 11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles."
12 Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" 13 He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone; they are blind guides of those who are blind. And if one person who is blind guides another, both will fall into a pit."

15 But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." 16 Then Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? 18 But what comes

out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. 19 For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."]

Only Matthew and Mark tell this story of a foreign woman who seeks help from Jesus. What's interesting is that Matthew adds that Jesus praises the woman's faith.

21 Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." 23 But Jesus did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." 26 Jesus answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, your trust is great! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that moment.