

## 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 11, 2020

It appears that all three of today's readings address the question, "who belongs?"

In the Isaiah reading, the Israelites have now returned to their land and to the temple in the city of Jerusalem. However while they were in exile in Babylon, they were intermingling with prisoners from various conquered countries. As Israelites were freed to return to their homeland, their rituals, and their Temple, many foreigners were eager to join their religion, their faith traditions. As long as they obeyed the Covenant they would be welcomed to the Holy Mountain, to the Temple of the Lord, for God's house is "a house of prayer for all peoples".

As the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul equated these foreigners to the Israelites, as all God's children. For just as Israel once disobeyed God, so too these Gentiles receive the welcoming Mercy of God. For God invites all to belong to Him.

And in our Gospel we have another Gentile, a Canaanite woman from Tyre and Sidon. This woman's persistence pressured the Apostle and even Jesus to open their eyes and their hearts to hear her pleading for her daughter's healing. Her faith goes deeper than the limits of "membership". Jesus opened the doors of belonging, and healed the child.

So our question remains: "Who determines belonging"? Traditions? Rituals? Apostles? Or even Jesus himself? No. GOD determines who belongs? In our world today we are very confused. Let us pray for the wisdom to see beyond our limitations as to who belongs.