

Sunday Sermon by His Eminence Serafim Archbishop of the Orthodox Archbishopric of Zimbabwe and Angola



SUNDAY SERMON - 14 of FEBRUARY 2021

This Sunday's Gospel extract refers to a Canaanite woman, who was asking Christ to heal her sick daughter.

The most remarkable aspects of this story are the following: Firstly, there seems to have been a social recognition for the person of Jesus regarding His divinity and His miraculous ability to heal the sick. Secondly, there seems to have been a perception, among the Jews, that their religion was limited only to their nation, and because the first Christians were Jews, there was the incorrect perception that only Jews could become Christian. Thirdly, it seems that he who is worthy to be heard by God is not he who thinks that he follows the correct religion, but he who has great faith in God. So, the Jews, while thinking that they had the correct religion, were at the same time the ones that crucified Christ. The Canaanite woman who was not a Jew and who was regarded as an idolater, is heard by God, and her daughter is

healed, because she had great faith in God. So Christ says to her: “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire” (Matthew 15:28).

But why has our Church chosen the Gospel extract that we heard today? Firstly, so that we too may accept the uniqueness of Christ, as the only true God, who can heal us from our illnesses as happened with the daughter of the Canaanite woman.

Secondly, to accept that the Orthodox faith is not only for Orthodox nations, namely for the Greeks, the Russians, the Romanians, the Serbs, or only for whites. The Orthodox faith is for all nations, and for all people, because all are children of God, and all should have the hope of salvation.

Thirdly, it is apparent that only when we have real faith in Christ can we find ourselves near to God.

Our faith in God is true when it is accompanied by the following characteristics: Firstly, when we live according to the will of God, i.e. according to His Divine Commandments. The will of God is that we keep ourselves apart from anything which harms us and our fellow man. To do whatever we can to help them to improve their lives, to guide them with our love and our concern to the love of God, to protect them and generally to contribute in every way to their salvation in Christ.

Secondly, our faith is true when our love is fair and equal to all people, without racial or social discriminations, without selfishness and ulterior motives and guile. We should look on the people we meet daily and who need our help as the people whom we love the most, like our parents, our children and our friends, and to do the very best for them.

Thirdly, our faith is true when we live as our Saints did, and whose name we have.

Fourthly, our faith is true when we are people of peace, kindness, serenity, stillness, tolerance, unity, patience, charity, humanity and truth, when we are people of God.

God calls to His service those who have truly decided to primarily do God’s will in their lives. In other words, those who forsake their own will and proceed entirely in God’s will. That is why, whatever they do, they do with the help and power of God.