

Second, God is drawn by our humility and brokenness, not only before His power, but mainly before people. Sincere and constant humility. A modern wise saint said: "Humility is not trying to convince others that we are not something, but the effort to convince ourselves. And then we have the grace to see the world and people as God made them". Not as we made it end up. So, humility opens our spiritual eyes to meet Christ within ourselves.

Archim. E. L

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18 , 2024. SUNDAY OF THE CANAANITE, Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, Agapetus the Confessor, Bishop of Sinai, Flavian the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople.**

**EPISTLE READING :** *St. Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to Corinthians 6:16-18*

**GOSPEL READING :** *Matthew 15: 21-28*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Fourth Tone*

**ETHINON :** *Fourth Eothinon*

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25 , 2024. SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE: TRIODION BEGINS TODAY, Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople , Reginos, Bishop of Skopelos, Holy Martyr Alexander of Thrace, Markellos, Bishop of Apamea.**

**EPISTLE READING :** *St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15*

**GOSPEL READING :** *Luke :18: 10-14*



72<sup>ST</sup> YEAR FEBRUARY 18 2024 PAMPHLET # 7 (3690)

## HAVE MERCY ON ME, LORD, SON OF DAVID!

Today's miracle of the gospel passage, shows a "hard" Christ with a behavior, the like of which we have never seen before in the New Testament. On the contrary, the behavior of the Canaanite mother is impressive. The Canaanite woman, that is, an idolater, approaches Christ and loudly cries out to Him to heal her daughter from the demon that she has. In this particular passage, no scream is heard from the possessed girl, but rather, the mother's begging cry.

### Knowledge through love

Christ does not pay attention to her, and treats her uncompassionately, with the aim of testing her faith. The idolatrous woman, as we heard in the Gospel dialogue, shows humility and sincerity and she courageously declares her faith in Christ's healing power. The result was, for what she asked with such strong faith, to happen.

## **GOSPEL READING : (MATTHEW 15:21-28)**

At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

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However, let's not focus on Christ's behavior or the faith of the Canaanite woman, but on the Lord's effort to avoid showing His power. It is hidden in the Old Testament, in Moses and in Isaiah. It is also hidden in the New Testament, as the evangelists John and Matthew tell us. It is hidden from the Pharisees and the priests of the temple and the scribes of Israel. But where does it manifest itself? The evangelist John gives us the answer. We can know Christ only through our fellow human beings. In other words, God transfers the possibility of knowing Him, in love, as the only feeling that has the ability to understand Him.

## **Meeting with Christ**

There is a great difference between knowing God and loving Him. Whoever loves Him, will know Him. Whoever does not love Him, will never know Him, even if he wants to. God, therefore, hides Himself from everywhere, so that we can know Him within ourselves.

We may not meet Him in our big churches, in the majesty of nature, or the ballast of people. It is certainly there, but it is hidden. We cannot locate Him. The Canaanite woman shows us the place of meeting with Christ. It is in us when we are tested, when we cry, when we hurt, when we long. He waits, without answering, as Christ did today. He waits for us to seek Him and loudly call out His name to heal us with His presence.

And then Christ will shout: "Man, you have great faith. Let what you wish, be done to you." And what we want is to know Christ so that our life can gain meaning. The Canaanite woman shows us the way.

## **Ways of encountering Christ**

First, our faith must remain unaffected and unshaken by the silence of God in the requests and supplications of our prayers. We remain and insist on our request, and when God judges, then He answers in time, and in the way that is the most beneficial for our soul.