

# Sunday, September 5, 2021

## Lectionary 23, Year B

### Introduction

James tells us to stop showing favoritism in the assembly, treating the rich visitor with more honor than the poor one. Jesus himself seems to show partiality in his first response to the Syrophenician woman in today's gospel. Was he testing her faith in saying Gentiles don't deserve the goods meant for God's children? Or was he speaking out of his human worldview, but transcended those limits when she took him by surprise with her reply? Either way, the story tells us that God shows no partiality. Everyone who brings a need to Jesus is received with equal honor as a child and heir.

### Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
whose teaching is life,  
whose presence is sure,  
and whose love is endless.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God our comforter:

**like lost sheep, we have gone astray.**

**We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity.**

**We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression.**

**We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed.**

**Free us from our sin, gracious God.**

**Listen when we call out to you for help.**

**Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

**Amen.**

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

By the gift of grace in ✠ Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous.

Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

**Amen.**

### Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, throughout the ages you transform sickness into health and death into life. Open us to the power of your presence, and make us a people ready to proclaim your promises to the whole world, through Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord.

**Amen.**

## Gospel Acclamation

*Alleluia.* Rejoice in the Lord always;\* again I will say, Rejoice. *Alleluia.* (Phil. 4:4)

## Readings and Psalm

### [Isaiah 35:4-7a](#)

*Like streams in the desert, God comes with healing*

### [Psalm 146](#)

I will praise the LORD as long as I live. (Ps. 146:2)

### [James 2:1-10 \[11-13\] 14-17](#)

*Faith without works is dead*

### [Mark 7:24-37](#)

*Christ healing a little girl and a deaf man*

## Semicontinuous First Reading and Psalm

### [Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23](#)

*Sayings concerning a good name and generosity*

### [Psalm 125](#)

Those who trust in the LORD stand fast forever. (Ps. 125:1)

## First Reading: Isaiah 35:4-7a

*These verses are a word of hope to the exiles in Babylon. Isaiah 34 portrays God's vengeance on Edom, Israel's age-old enemy, which makes the path from Babylon to Zion safe for the exiles' return. The desert itself will flow with water to give drink to the returning exiles.*

<sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you."

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
<sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
<sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water.

## Psalm: Psalm 146

*I will praise the LORD as long as I live. (Ps. 146:2)*

<sup>1</sup>Hal- | lelujah!

Praise the LORD, | O my soul!

**<sup>2</sup>I will praise the LORD as long | as I live;**

**I will sing praises to my God while I | have my being.**

<sup>3</sup>Put not your | trust in rulers,

in mortals in whom there | is no help.

**<sup>4</sup>When they breathe their last, they re- | turn to earth,**

**and in that day | their thoughts perish. R**

<sup>5</sup>Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,

whose hope is in the | LORD their God;

**<sup>6</sup>who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them;**

**who keeps promis- | es forever;**

<sup>7</sup>who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to | those who hunger.

The LORD sets the | captive free.

**<sup>8</sup>The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who | are bowed down;**

**the LORD | loves the righteous. R**

<sup>9</sup>The LORD cares | for the stranger;

the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way | of the wicked.

**<sup>10</sup>The LORD shall | reign forever,**

**your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. | Hallelujah! R**

## **Second Reading: James 2:1-10 [11-13] 14-17**

*Faithful Christians do not show partiality to the rich and powerful of the world, especially at the expense of the poor and weak. Likewise, faith does not pay mere lip service to God's will.*

*Instead, a living Christian faith expresses itself in acts of compassion and mercy for those in need.*

<sup>1</sup>My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? <sup>2</sup>For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, <sup>3</sup>and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," <sup>4</sup>have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup>Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? <sup>6</sup>But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? <sup>7</sup>Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

<sup>8</sup>You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. [<sup>11</sup>For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup>So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup>For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy

triumphs over judgment.]

<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? <sup>17</sup>So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

## **Gospel: Mark 7:24-37**

*In Mark’s gospel, encounters with women usually signify turning points in Jesus’ ministry. Here, a conversation with a Syrophenician woman marks the beginning of his mission to the Gentiles.*

<sup>24</sup>[Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice,<sup>25</sup> but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. <sup>26</sup>Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup>He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” <sup>28</sup>But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” <sup>29</sup>Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.” <sup>30</sup>So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

<sup>31</sup>Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup>They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup>He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup>Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” <sup>35</sup>And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup>Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup>They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

## **Semicontinuous First Reading: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23**

*The sayings in the book of Proverbs impart the collective wisdom of centuries. Speaking of wealth and poverty, these particular verses teach that those who are blessed by God should honor the poor, for they are within God’s special care.*

<sup>1</sup>A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,  
and favor is better than silver or gold.

<sup>2</sup>The rich and the poor have this in common:  
the LORD is the maker of them all.

<sup>8</sup>Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity,  
and the rod of anger will fail.

<sup>9</sup>Those who are generous are blessed,  
for they share their bread with the poor.

<sup>22</sup>Do not rob the poor because they are poor,  
or crush the afflicted at the gate;

<sup>23</sup>for the LORD pleads their cause  
and despoils of life those who despoil them.

## Semicontinuous Psalm: Psalm 125

*Those who trust in the LORD stand fast forever. (Ps. 125:1)*

<sup>1</sup>Those who trust in the LORD are | like Mount Zion,  
which cannot be moved, but stands | fast forever.

<sup>2</sup>**The mountains sur- | round Jerusalem;  
so you surround your people, O LORD, from this time forth for- | evermore. R**

<sup>3</sup>The scepter of the wicked shall not hold sway over the land allotted | to the just,  
so that the just shall not put their | hands to evil.

<sup>4</sup>**Show your goodness, O LORD, to those | who are good  
and to those who are | true of heart.**

<sup>5</sup>As for those who turn aside to crooked ways, the LORD will lead them away with the |  
evildoers;

but peace be | upon Israel. **R**

## Prayers of Intercession

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

Holy One, you bring your people together in worship. Enliven your church. Guide all evangelists, preachers, prophets, and missionaries who seek to share your love through word and deed. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

You provide water for thirsty ground and sunshine to feed hungry plants. Bless all who advocate for healthy forests, unpolluted air, and clean waterways. Inspire all people to show care for the world you have made. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

You show no partiality. Increase justice in all nations. Encourage leaders and governments to work with one another for the good of our common world. (*Especially as we celebrate Labor/Labour Day,*) unite us in seeking the health, safety, and dignity of all. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

You accompany those who are most in need. Shelter all fleeing violence or persecution, protect any who are in danger, and sustain them through uncertain and unstable times. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

You support the work of your disciples. Continue to nurture the leadership and ministries of this congregation (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

You embrace all who have died in the faith and brought them into your glorious presence. We thank you for their example and rejoice in their lives. Lord, in your mercy,

**hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Offering Prayer**

God of abundance,  
you cause streams to break forth in the desert  
and manna to rain from the heavens.

Accept the gifts you have first given us.  
Unite them with the offering of our lives  
to nourish the world you love so dearly;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Invitation to Communion**

All who hunger and thirst, come.  
The table is ready.

## **Prayer after Communion**

Lord of life,  
in the gift of your body and blood  
you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation.  
Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy,  
bearing witness to the abundance of your love  
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **Blessing**

People of God,  
you are Christ's body,  
bringing new life to a suffering world.  
The holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.  
**Thanks be to God.**

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## **Upcoming Commemorations**

### **Peter Claver, priest, missionary to Colombia, died 1654 Thursday, September 9, 2021**

Born into Spanish nobility, Claver became a Jesuit missionary, and served in present-day Colombia. His ministry was focused on the slaves that arrived there. He gave them food and medicine, learned their dialects, and taught them Christianity.

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