

Father Rudy's Reflections  
The Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time  
August 20, 2023

## Have Humble but Persistent Faith

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

Although most of us do not often like to dwell on these things, children in this world are suffering or *have suffered* a catastrophic illness or injury that has rocked the foundation of their family's lives. Tremendous mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges face all of us at one time or another, yet when it involves a child, we are moved when considering the pain and uncertainty it causes all concerned. And when one thinks about the child's mother, well, it's just so heartbreaking to watch her face as she strives to make things right.

On this Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Matthew's Gospel contains an important message for us in Jesus's encounter with the Canaanite woman who seeks his help for her suffering daughter. In this story, this woman's faith and persistence serves as a timeless example of the power of her humble, hopeful, yet dogged determination to turn these circumstances around. Moreover, she understands with great insight that it will take only a small fragment of God's mercy and grace—"scraps that fall from the table"—to secure her daughter's good health.

Her story compels us to recognize the immense strength found in a mother's love—a love that is willing to move mountains for the sake of a child. This love transcends boundaries and motivates parents to endure hardships, advocate for their children, and seek miraculous healing despite the odds. It is significant that despite Jesus's initial silence about the request, this woman refuses to be deterred by obstacles in her path. Her faith was a wondrous force that withstood all opposition and highlights the transformative power of belief when faced with seemingly insurmountable odds. Her example calls us to deepen our own faith during challenging moments and to never relinquish optimism in God's power to change lives. Our faith must endure as a beacon of hope and resilience, no matter the circumstances or the level of despair.

In times of suffering and uncertainty, it is essential for us to remember our faith is not merely a passive belief; rather, it has the potential to be a catalyst for change. By drawing strength from the Canaanite woman's example, we can channel our faith into action and offer compassion, assistance, and prayer for those in need.

*"We may even imagine that Our Lord does not hear us; that we are being deluded, that all we hear is the monologue of our own voice. . . Nevertheless. . . with the stubbornness of the Canaanite woman, we go down on our knees as she did, adoring him and imploring 'Lord, help me.' The darkness will vanish, vanquished by the light of Love."—St. Josemaría Escrivá*

Yours in Christ,  
Father Rudy