

Grant us, O Lord, to trust you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LOOK

Describe a time when you were treated unfairly because you were different than the majority.

Who in your personal and/or professional life seems most different than you? Do you find relationship with them challenging?

BOOK

Mark 7:24-37

24From there he 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, 25but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. 26Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27He 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." 28But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." 29Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." 30So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

31Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. 32They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 33He

took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. 34Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 36Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 37They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

- 1) Jesus goes to Gentile (non-Jewish) territory to rest. He wants to be incognito. He refuses to help a woman in need and calls her a 'dog'. Why would the gospel writer include such an unflattering story about Jesus?
- 2) What justification is there for the initial response of Jesus to this woman? Does it hold any validity?
- 3) According to the gospel of Mark, what persuaded Jesus to open his ears, to change his mind? What does this tell us about our prayer lives?
- 4) In the same story told in Matthew 15, Jesus says, 'Great is your faith!' Compare and contrast these two versions of the story. How did Matthew change the story and why?

TOOK

- 1) What boundaries have you drawn in your life? When are boundaries healthy? When are they limiting our growth and

God's mission? How do we know the difference?

- 2) How do we balance the call for 'loving the other' with the imperative to name and change behavior that is destructive, demeaning or divisive?
- 3) How do we justify doing nothing or very little to reach out to those who seem to be the 'ultimate others' to us? What valid reasons do we give? How do we break through these myths?
- 4) The initial response of Jesus implies that there is a limited supply of 'food' or love or healing he has available. How did his view change? What do you think you have a limited supply of? Compassion? Tolerance? Hope? Patience? Money? Time? How does this story challenge your perception of scarcity?
- 5) From this point on in Mark's gospel, Jesus has a vastly different and expanded view of his mission. How do we need to enlarge the circles we draw at St. David's? Who is the 'ultimate other' to us?