

## The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Matthew 15:21-28

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (KJV)

### Sunday after the Exaltation of the Precious Life-giving Cross

#### Mark 8:34-9:1

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power. (KJV)

The Gospel is proclaimed today in God's Holy Church. The Gospel has been proclaimed down through the centuries to nourish and guide believers. Believers' lives become more Christ-like as a result of having heard the Gospel.

Attentive believers hear the Gospel when they gather to worship in parish churches and monasteries. From the time of Holy Baptism until departure from this life, believers benefit from hearing the Gospel.

Today's Gospel reading from St. Matthew demonstrates the value of strong faith to deal with issues caused by the devil. The mother in the Gospel turned to Jesus for the curing ills her daughter was facing.

The mother persistently appealed to Jesus to cure her daughter of vexations caused by the devil. Jesus responded to the mother's resolute faith. Jesus healed the daughter.

Relationships in the home, at work or in the community can be improved when believers are resolute in faith. Believers with resolute faith do well to address issues created by the devil.

Contemporary believers' resolute appeals to the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy are definitive and sound. The mother's resolute faith in the current Gospel gives hope to contemporary believers to appeal to Jesus for mercy.

Today's reading from St. Mark's Gospel verifies the value of following Christ. The soul is valued more than the whole world. Following Jesus Christ in dealing with personal crosses in life leads to renewal of the life in Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ's example of ascending The Cross empowers believers to deal with life's personal crosses. Being immersed in Jesus Christ is the best way to face life's difficult challenges.

Believers are expected to grow in Christ from the time of Holy Baptism until departure from this life. God's Holy Church provides the environment for the growth to occur.

The Gospel and the Holy Mysteries of the Church lead and nourish the believer throughout the life cycle. The Divine services of the Church provide constant support for believers journeying to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life.

Saints and martyrs of the Church are inspirational examples for believers of each generation. New martyrs and saints appear in every generation to verify the value of living in Christ.

The crosses of personal life may seem overwhelming at times. Life's outlook will seem dark at unexpected moments. No day was darker in the world than the day Jesus died on The Cross.

The darkness of the day Jesus' died on The Cross was followed shortly thereafter by His Resurrection. Jesus proved He was the Conqueror of death. Jesus teaches believers the way to deal with the personal crosses of life.

Jesus gives believers the strength and wisdom for dealing with life's crosses. Growth in Christ results from responsibly dealing with life's crosses. Christ transforms believers when they unite with Him in prayer and in faith.

The Holy Mysteries of the Church unite believers with Christ. Confession, Communion and Holy Unction bring healing and joy to believers. Constant repentance ensures the believer and Christ remain inseparable.

The Lord Jesus Christ is within reach of each believer at all times of life. The Lord Jesus Christ is present at every moment of life. The Holy Apostle Paul reassured believers with his words recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. (Acts. 17:28)

The Holy Apostle Paul said those seeking the Lord will find He is not far. Apostle Paul's words about the Lord were specific. He said: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts. 17:28)

Rejoice in the Lord's presence today and every day. Be grateful to the Lord for the proclamation of the Gospel and the Divine services and Holy Mysteries of the Church. Seek always to repent, be thankful and seek to grow in Christ

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The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. The Sunday after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross. Venerable Martyr Eumenius, Bishop of Gortyna, Holy Martyr Ariadne September 18/October 1, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic