**WEDNESDAY AUGUST 04 – XVIII WEEK O.T. [B]**

**"It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters."**

**Jesus is the new temple of the Father: “For in him dwells the whole fullness of the deity bodily, and you share in this fullness in him, who is the head of every principality and power.” (Col 2,9-10) Every prayer must be raised to the Father from this most holy temple. The prayer of Salomon is valid for every man, even for whoever is not a disciple of Jesus. “Listen to the petitions of your servant and of your people Israel which they offer in this place. Listen from your heavenly dwelling and grant pardon. "If a man sins against his neighbor and is required to take an oath sanctioned by a curse, when he comes and takes the oath before your altar in this temple, listen in heaven; take action and pass judgment on your servants. Condemn the wicked and punish him for his conduct, but acquit the just and establish his innocence. "If your people Israel sin against you and are defeated by an enemy, and if then they return to you, praise your name, pray to you, and entreat you in this temple, listen in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them back to the land you gave their fathers. "If the sky is closed, so that there is no rain, because they have sinned against you and you afflict them, and if then they repent of their sin, and pray, and praise your name in this place, listen in heaven and forgive the sin of your servant and of your people Israel, teaching them the right way to live and sending rain upon this land of yours which you have given to your people as their heritage.**

**"If there is famine in the land or pestilence; or if blight comes, or mildew, or a locust swarm, or devouring insects; if an enemy of your people besieges them in one of their cities; whatever plague or sickness there may be, if then any one (of your entire people Israel) has remorse of conscience and offers some prayer or petition, stretching out his hands toward this temple, listen from your heavenly dwelling place and forgive. You who alone know the hearts of all men, render to each one of them according to his conduct; knowing their hearts, so treat them that they may fear you as long as they live on the land you gave our fathers. "To the foreigner, likewise, who is not of your people Israel, but comes from a distant land to honor you (since men will learn of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, listen from your heavenly dwelling. Do all that the foreigner asks of you, that all the peoples of the earth may know your name, may fear you as do your people Israel, and may acknowledge that this temple which I have built is dedicated to your honor. "Whatever the direction in which you may send your people forth to war against their enemies, if they pray to you, O LORD, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built in your honor, listen in heaven to their prayer and petition, and defend their cause. "When they sin against you (for there is no man who does not sin), and in your anger against them you deliver them to the enemy, so that their captors deport them to a hostile land, far or near, may they repent in the land of their captivity and be converted. If then they entreat you in the land of their captors and say, 'We have sinned and done wrong; we have been wicked'; if with their whole heart and soul they turn back to you in the land of the enemies who took them captive, pray to you toward the land you gave their fathers, the city you have chosen, and the temple I have built in your honor, listen from your heavenly dwelling. Forgive your people their sins and all the offenses they have committed against you, and grant them mercy before their captors, so that these will be merciful to them. For they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of an iron furnace. "Thus may your eyes be open to the petition of your servant and to the petition of your people Israel. Hear them whenever they call upon you, because you have set them apart among all the peoples of the earth for your inheritance, as you declared through your servant Moses when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD." (1Kg 8,30-53).**

**The Canaanite woman, a foreigner, asks Jesus, the Son of David, the most holy temple of the Father, that he listens to her prayer. This prayer arises from a most pure faith. It arises from her faith in the truth of Jesus the Lord. Jesus wants to test how strong, tenacious, resistant her faith is. He also wants to test how strong, tenacious, great is the love of this woman for her little daughter. For this reason, the prayer is not granted. The apostles who intercede for her are not even heard. Why? Because their intercession is not fruit neither of faith nor of love. It is done only because the cry of this woman bothered them. One does not intercede because one is bothered. One must intercede for love, for most pure faith, for compassion, for mercy, for true piety.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 15,21-28**

**Then Jesus went from that place and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not say a word in answer to her. His disciples came and asked him, "Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us." He said in reply, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But the woman came and did him homage, saying, "Lord, help me." He said in reply, "It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters." Then Jesus said to her in reply, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed from that hour.**

**Not even before the non-listening of the apostles who had interceded for her, does the woman give up. Now she is the one who bows down before Jesus and asks for help. Jesus replies that it is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs. It is true, the woman answers. But even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters. What does this answer of the woman mean for us and for the entire world? It means wisdom, intelligence, great acumen of mind. But, above all, it means to give Jesus a reason so that he can perform the miracle. It is true. Jesus was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But if he meets a sheep not his along the way, he does not certainly abandon it to itself. The Shepherd is always Shepherd. The Good Shepherd is always good Shepherd. The sheep is always sheep. It is true. The bread is of the children and not for dogs. But if a scrap falls from the table of the master, it is a right of the dogs. They, too, should to be able to feed themselves. They are in the house and it is right that they live of what is in the house.**

**Now Jesus can perform the miracle. He takes nothing away to the sheep that are not of the house of Israel and he takes nothing away to the children. Jesus admires this faith and shows it to her: "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." Our prayer will never have to be a breath of lips. It will have to be the breath of the heart, of the soul. But it will have to be the breath of a heart and of a soul in which Christ Jesus dwells and the most pure faith in Him together with our most pure love for the person for which we intercede. The woman does not ask for the grace because she is bothered by the sickness of the daughter. She asks for the grace for most pure love toward her. The mother is ready to consecrate her entire life to the daughter, but all her love does not give her full life. Jesus can give her full life and, for this reason, she approaches Him and intercedes until the grace is granted. Faith and love open all doors of the heart of Christ Jesus. Faith and love obtain for us every grace. Mother of God and our Mother, always add your holy breath to our spirit and our soul, and, through you, our prayer will surely be fulfilled. Amen.**