



Lent reflection for Tuesday, March 7th

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Matthew 15:21-28

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

Today's reflection is by Carolina Toth

I've got two little kids, 4 and 2. In this passage, I see God in the fierce love that the Canaanite woman has for her daughter. God is in the persistence of the Canaanite woman, and her bravery on behalf of her daughter. God is in her intelligence with her quick comeback, and in her faith both in Jesus and in her own ability to change his mind. I hope that if my child were very sick or very disturbed, that I would have her perceptiveness to seek Jesus out and her determination to make him help.

I've always found this passage worrying - in that Jesus had to be convinced to help her in the first place, or that he compared the woman to a dog, or ignored her cry. But how many times have I ignored someone asking me for money (in a fundraising e-mail, or in the subway) who had legitimate need? I think things like - "I already give to many good causes, and have planned out my giving for the year" or "How do I know if they are tricking me or not, or if they would use the

money 'well'?" I should probably still be more generous than I am - but I don't think these ideas are necessarily wrong. Maybe Jesus just didn't know about her need, having just heard her shout while he was walking by in a strange land. Maybe he was walking to heal many more people who were also in need, or had already planned out all his healing for his own community, and wasn't sure this woman was in real need of his healing or just shouting as he passed.

But she was for real, and she convinced him. I see God much more clearly in this passage when I focus on her - she is a model to follow if you want find healing for your child. To seek Jesus out, to be tenacious, to be brave, to never give up even if others discourage you, to use your wits, and to keep putting yourself in front of Jesus and asking for what you need.

Carolina lives with her husband Lukas, son Miro, and daughter Liana as well as her sibling James and their wife Emily! They moved to the neighborhood about six months ago. She works as a consultant in applied behavioral science.

