

Our Lady of Grace



Catholic Parish

595 East Main Street • Avon Park, Florida 33825

Parish Office (863) 453-4757



20th Sunday Ordinary Time

August 16, 2026

Parish Office Hours

Monday through Friday
8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Fr. Ronnie Sison
Pastor

Schedule of Masses

Saturday Confession

3:30 PM English
6:30 PM Spanish

Vigil Mass

4 PM English
7 PM Spanish

Sunday

8 AM and 10:30 AM

Holy Days

Vigil Mass 6:30 PM
8 & 10:30 AM

Daily Mass

Tuesday-Friday
8 AM

First Friday

Mass and Holy Hour
8 AM

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www.ologap.org



Then Jesus said to her,

*"Woman, you have
great faith!"*

Your request is granted."

And her daughter was healed at that moment.

— MATTHEW 15:28 (NIV) —



FAITH MOVES MOUNTAINS



PERSISTENT PRAYER WORKS



HUMILITY OPENS DOORS



TRUST IN GOD'S POWER

*Are you searching for an answer to
Drug/Alcohol 'possession' – addiction?*



Like the Canaanite Woman with a daughter **“possessed by a demon,”** who reached out to Jesus for a healing, do we ever reach out to Jesus if we have a family member or friend **‘possessed’/addicted to a ‘demon’ - like, Drugs, Drink, Pornography.....?**

Today’s 1st reading from Isaiah, foretells that **“foreigners”** – that is **Gentiles, non-believers** – will enter the Temple in Jerusalem, and will offer sacrifice and be allowed to pray in the Temple.

Today’s Gospel fulfills that prophecy as we see Jesus’ leave Palestine and **“withdraw to the region of Tyre and Sidon,”** which is a **Gentile region – a region of non-believers.** He is confronted by a **Canaanite woman**, who pleads for his help: **“Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is possessed by a demon.”**

The Canaanite woman, obviously a Gentile, appears to be aware of who Jesus is, at least that he possesses great healing power. **She addresses him in the course of today’s Gospel as “Lord” three times, and “Son of David,” which are Messianic titles.** She appears to be more aware of who Jesus is than the Scribes and Pharisees and – even his own disciples. When Jesus asked his disciples a little later in Matthew’s Gospel (16: 13-16), **“Who do people say I am?”** They respond, **“Some people think that you are John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the great prophets.”** So, you can see, even among his own followers there is confusion as to **who he is.** But this Canaanite woman appears to know more than the Scribes & Pharisees & Jesus’ own disciples. **She greets him: “Lord” & “Son of David.”**

Jesus ignores her initial appeal. Mt says, **“But Jesus did not say a word in answer to her.”**

If Jesus’ response seems insensitive, **his disciples’ response** is even more insensitive, **“Send her away.”** Their response, similar to their response when Jesus suggested they feed the large crowd that followed him to a deserted place when it was getting late in the afternoon, was, **“send them away to the nearby villages where they can get some food.”**

Over the centuries, **there is often a similar response by the followers of Jesus** when they are asked to do something **at a time which appears to be inconvenient for them.** Christianity is not, and was never intended by Jesus, to be **a religion of convenience.** It is **a religion of conviction,** which means that we respond to genuine needs when they arise - **convenient or not convenient.**

Then Jesus says, almost by way of explanation, **“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”** **But the woman**, becoming more desperate, persisted, **“Lord, help me.”** While Jesus hears the woman’s heart-rending appeal, he responds with an answer which to us sounds very harsh, **“It is not right,”** he said, **“to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.”**

This response has left scripture scholars scratching their heads. Most of them agree that the word used for **“dogs”** refers to a lap dog, a puppy, or a family pet. This becomes obvious from the context. We only allow family pets into the house. And when we do, they will frequently receive treats from our tables. I believe **this is what is envisaged in this conversation between**

Jesus and the woman. She counters Jesus' with her own quick resilience and persistence. **She** says, *"Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters."*

Jesus is amazed at the depth of the woman's faith and responds, *"O Woman, great is your faith."* **In last Sunday's Gospel** Jesus responded to **Peter and his disciples** as Peter walked toward him on the water in the midst of the storm as he began to sink, *"O, you of little faith."* There is only **one other reference on Matthew's Gospel**, which you will find in **Chapter 7**, where **Jesus praises someone's faith**. Again, it was the faith of a **Gentile, a Centurion, a Roman soldier** with 100 soldiers under him. The Centurion asked Jesus to come and heal his servant who was paralyzed. Jesus said he would come. Then **the Centurion, out of respect for Jesus, said, "Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof; say but the word and my servant shall be healed."** These are words we utter when we receive Holy Communion. And, Jesus' response? He was *"amazed"* at the faith of the Centurion, *"I have not found faith like this in Israel"*

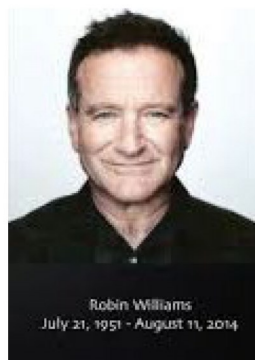
The two greatest expressions of faith in all four Gospels were found among two Gentiles, two non-believers, who sought Jesus' help. **In our own time** among world leaders over the past 100 years, perhaps, two of the greatest leaders were **Mahatma Gandhi** and **Nelson Mandela**. **Gandhi**, who loved to read the bible, especially the **Sermon on the Mount**, said, that if he ever met a Christian who lived the **Sermon on the Mount** that he would have become a Christian.

Sometime you will find a greater untapped faith outside the Catholic Church. Jesus recognizes that in the **Canaanite woman** and in the **Roman Centurion**.

We pray in the creed every Sunday, "I believe in One, Holy, **Catholic** and Apostolic Church." What does the word **"Catholic"** mean here? The origin of the word is Greek, *"Catolicos,"* which means **Universal**, or, **open to everyone**. At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus invites us to share in his mission when he says, *"Go, therefore, make disciples of **all nations**..."* We see Jesus begin that process in today's Gospel. He goes beyond Jewish boundaries and **offers salvation to the Canaanite woman and her demon possessed daughter**.

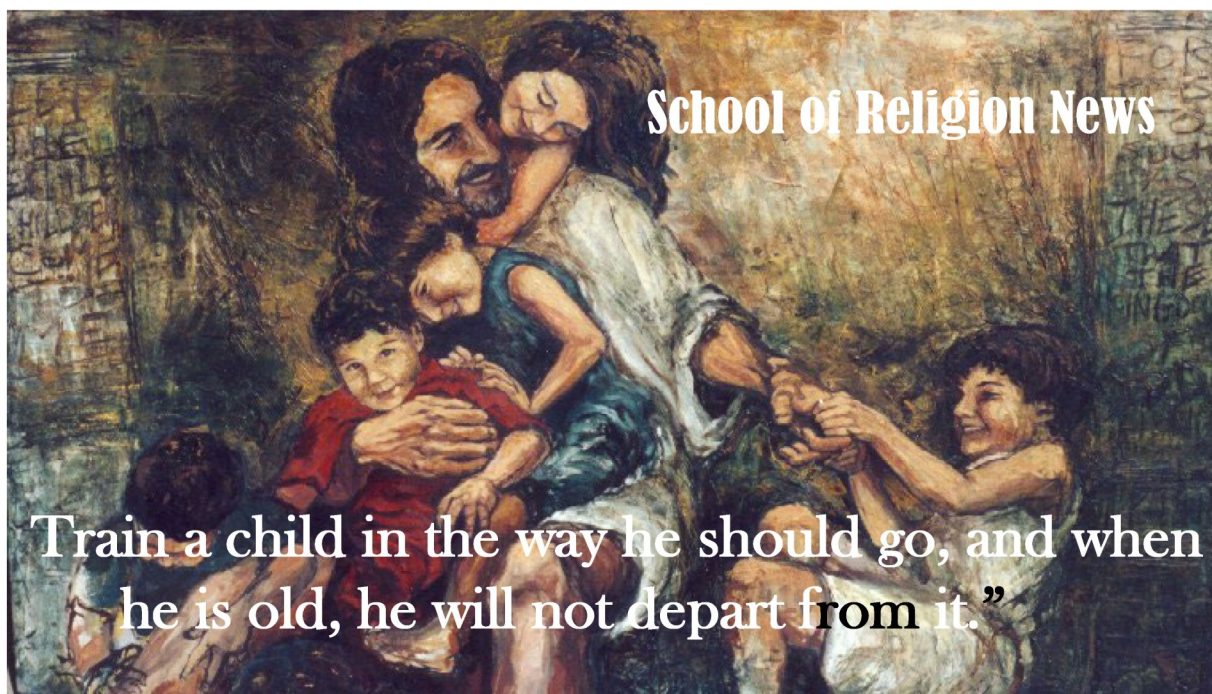
It is true that the Jews are God's special people, his chosen people, chosen to be God's instrument to bring his salvation to all people. **It is in and through us today that God invites those who are outside the boundaries of our church** – Like the Canaanite woman and the Centurion – such as friends, family members, with this burning desire and a restless search to find what we are privileged to possess. **Pope Francis** did not want a *'maintenance church,'* where we wait for people to come to us; he wants a *'mission church,'* in which we **invite the 'searchers and seekers'** to come to know and to accept Jesus and to experience his healing.

There are many wounded people rubbing shoulders with us every day, like the wounded daughter of the Canaanite woman in today's Gospel. I often wonder what might have happened **if Robin Williams**, the great movie actor, producer, director and comedian, who took his own life – **a gifted wounded man**, who seemed to have everything, except that which **he most needed to heal his inner wounds and exorcise his inner demons**, if a friend might have introduced him to the healing power of Jesus.



Robin Williams
July 21, 1951 - August 11, 2014

Let us reach out to help people who are beyond our boundaries as Jesus did, in responding to the desperate and persistent appeal of the **Canaanite woman** in bringing healing to her daughter. **Pope Francis described the Church as a "large field hospital"** to bring healing to a wounded world.



School of Religion News

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

“The Future starts today not tomorrow”

St. Pope John Paul II

Registration for School of Religion

Classes Begin

Wednesday, September 2nd, for grades 7 – 12,
Confirmation class & Bible study: 6:30 – 8:00 P.M.

Sunday, September 6th, for grades pre-K 4 - 6,
9 – 10:15 a.m.

Parents can register their children for the School of Religion:

Register in Sarah MacDonald Education Bldg.

Monday to Friday, 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Information: call Mayra Donan,

Director of Religious Education: (863)453-7537

Catechetical Sunday – Sunday, September 20th, 10:30 a.m.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) designated Sunday, Sept 20th Catechetical Sunday. This year's theme is: ***“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to bring good news to the poor”*** (Lk 4:18). Parishes traditionally commission catechists during Mass on this day, normally 10:30 A.M. Mass

First family Mass, Sunday, October 4th, 10:30 a.m.

Vigésimo Domingo del TIEMPO ORDINARIO

¿Por qué Jesús se porta de esa forma con la mujer cananea?

No lo hace para desanimarla, sino para obtener una respuesta de fe. Quiere ver si va a pedir con persistencia.

Podemos decirnos a nosotros mismos que somos personas de fe, pero ¿nos desanimamos fácilmente? La respuesta inteligente de la mujer a Jesús nos recuerda que ella confiaba en el poder y la voluntad de Jesús de ayudarla.

Jesús también estaba enseñando a sus discípulos que la fe es más importante que la nacionalidad. Algunas personas piensan que solo los católicos pueden salvarse y que no hay esperanza para los protestantes y mucho menos para los judíos. Dios no puede rescindir la alianza que hizo con el pueblo elegido. San Pablo dice que el hecho de que los líderes judíos rechazaron a Jesús condujo a la salvación del resto del mundo. Pero, aunque algunos rechazaron a Jesús, Dios nunca rechazó a los judíos.

Como la mujer que no se iba, podemos seguir orando hasta obtener una respuesta a nuestra oración. Si bien a veces Dios concede nuestra petición, a veces tiene una buena razón para retrasarla o incluso decir que no. Mientras pasamos más tiempo en la oración, es más probable que escuchemos la respuesta de Dios. La oración puede ayudarnos a aceptar con tranquilidad que Dios solo hace lo que es mejor para nosotros. __Tom Schmidt



EDUCACIÓN RELIGIOSA

Grados K-12 Y Post Confirmación

La Oficina está abierta Lunes - Viernes de 9am-4:30pm. El costo es de \$40 por estudiante y \$65 por familia. Para más información llamar Mayra Doñan 863-453-7537.

Adultos / OCIA

(Orden de Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos)
Es el proceso de formación y preparación en la Iglesia Católica para adultos que desean recibir los sacramentos del Bautismo, la Confirmación o la Eucaristía. Domingos de 9:00-10:00am comenzando Septiembre 6. Para información llamar Florentino Perada al (863) 840-4533 u oficina 863-453-7537.

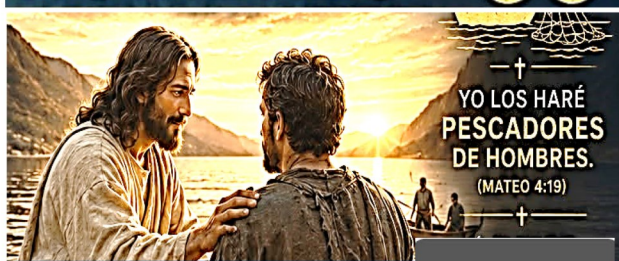
GRUPO DE ORACIÓN "SANTISIMA TRINIDAD"

Se reúne los jueves a las 7:00pm en la Iglesia. Rosario a las 6:30. Para información llamar Hortencia 863-448-6869 o Adela 863-528-8267.

GRUPO JUAN XXIII

Se reúne los martes en el salón Juan Bosco a las 7:00PM. Para información llamar Omar 863-205-0694 o Elvin 863-852-0065.

MOVIMIENTO JUAN XXIII
— DIOCESIS DE VENICE FL —
**RETIRIO DE
HOMBRES #50**



SEPT. 18, 19, Y 20

MASS INTENTIONS**SATURDAY AUGUST 15**

4:00 p.m. + Michael Rand by Family.

7:00 p.m. Nelly Santara by Tata

Batista.

Javier Bernier by Jorge

Bernier.

SUNDAY AUGUST 16

8:00 a.m. + Mary Joan Bender by

Rebecca Kneller.

MONDAY AUGUST 17

8:00 a.m. No Mass.

TUESDAY AUGUST 188:00 a.m. JR & May Richardson by
Family.**WEDNESDAY AUGUST 19**8:00 a.m. + Mary Joan Bender by
Rebecca Kneller.**THURSDAY AUGUST 20**8:00 a.m. + Joan Bender by Dorothy
Pansius.**FRIDAY AUGUST 21**8:00 a.m. + Souls of Purgatory – Estela
& Atilio Rojas by Family.**SATURDAY AUGUST 22**

4:00 p.m. + Michael Rand by Family.

7:00 p.m. + Souls of Purgatory.

EMERGENCY PRAYER CHAIN

To give spiritual support to those who are undergoing health or personal problems that call for immediate prayer, we have established an “**Emergency Prayer Chain**” made up of prayer volunteers who respond to personal requests. Confidentiality is assured. To request prayers, contact **Kevin Murphy** by text (863) 443-1852 or email (kmurphy8479@gmail.com).

FOR THE SICK OF THE PARISH

Joan Morgan	Candida Reyes	Kathy Furtado
Rosa Arosemena	Andres Clavijo	Jade Jackson
Martha Clavijo	Carol Krause	Donna Skelly
Roger Brelinski	Jean Rapp	Rosemary Melinson
Cameron Prosperi	Deb Perry	Louise Schorsch
Donald Schorsch	Ed Carrigan	Joey Prescott
Bea Pedara	Marty Worley	Sharon Ingalls
Susan Beaudoin	Amy Slane	Jeff Babbitt
Rose Brault	Waylen James	Sherry
Jerry Grinkiewicz	eannie Stopa	Jim Stopa
Marie Burley	Rick Burley	Ron Maslyk
Kathy Reiser	Clay Gooch	Janice Vreeland
Joan Trace	Jan Raccine	Paul Repa
Joan Reetz	Brenda Buergi	Jackie & Steven
Waylon James Adams	Michael Thomas Adams	
Earl Hershberger	Jennifer Vohs	Terry O'Leary
Coty Quillman	Jacqueline Orlando	

And for those who care for the sick, for the deceased member's and benefactors of the parish, and for our loved ones.

HURRICANE PRAYER

God, our Father, Creator and Lord of the Universe, You have set the earth on its foundation and all elements of nature obey your command. We humbly beseech you to keep us safe from all dangers and calm the storms that may threaten us. May we be secure in your loving protection and serve you always with grateful hearts. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you forever. Amen.

Staff & Ministries

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Eric Quiel
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863-414-5002

Women's Guild

Debora Augusta
President
(863)991-1020

OCIA Director

Travis & Dawn Crosson
(863)453-4757

Parish Council

President

Betty Anne Lee
863-873-7176



Partnership

I dreamed I stood in a studio and watched two sculptors there.
The clay they used was a young child's mind and they fashioned
it with care.

One was a teacher: the tools he used were books, music and art.
One was a parent with a guiding hand and a gentle loving heart.
Day after day the teacher toiled with a touch that was deft and
sure

While the parent labored by his side & polished & made it pure.
And when at last their task was done, they were proud of what
they had wrought,

For the things they had molded into the child could neither be
sold or bought.

And each agreed he would have failed if they had
worked alone,

For behind the parent, stood the school and behind the
teacher.....the home.