

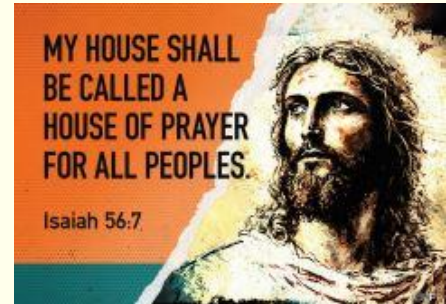


From the Desk of Father Ring

Breaks Down Scripture - Open House

Open House

We hear from the last section of Isaiah this weekend, known as 3rd Isaiah. The Babylonian exile has ended, the Temple has been rebuilt, and the prophet's vision of God's plan is quite radical. Rather than the exclusive pride of those born Jewish, the temple is meant to be a house of prayer for all people. (When cleansing the temple, Jesus quoted these very words!) More shocking yet, the prophet tells us that offerings of foreigners who come into the faith will be just as welcomed and acceptable as those whose whole life has been lived in the covenant. I recall words I heard a bishop speak years ago. A different context, but the issue of inclusion or exclusion was the same. "It would be a mighty strange theology that would exclude them." A possible task for the week: reflect on how we can make our house of prayer a house of prayer for all people.



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Broken Family

Last week we heard St. Paul's deep lament that many of his fellow Jews did not accept Jesus as their Messiah, leading to division in the one family he believed God calls into grace. He continues reflecting on that family rift in today's reading. Perhaps his fellow Jews who failed to accept Jesus will see Gentiles living in grace, growing communities worshiping the one true God, as well as more and

more people living in covenant love. Moved by jealousy at the sight, some who have rejected Jesus would be moved to accept him as the Christ. This passage was not selected to connect with the 1st reading or the Gospel; we simply have been working through Paul's letter to the Romans. However, that 'the gifts and call of God are irrevocable' flows beautifully from the vision of our first reading and the prayer of the psalm.

Never Give Up

Of course, Jesus loved his own people. Bringing back the lost sheep of the house of Israel was his mission, his passion. But the Canaanite woman in our Gospel today was just as passionate about the well-being of her daughter. Not one to give up, she isn't ready to walk away from the chance her daughter could be made whole. According to John, what pushed Jesus to begin his ministry before he felt it was time? Mary's concern about the embarrassed family in Cana who ran out of wine! Another key turning point in his ministry? This Canaanite woman's persistence, opening his ministry among Gentiles. Jesus was not only Divine, he was also fully human in all things but sin. Isn't it part of our human nature that at times people and their circumstances call us to step out in faith? Lord, help us to realize how other's needs can be an invitation into grace, calling us to live our mission. Help us to realize as well that sharing our need may help others to live their mission, a graced opportunity for both.

From the Desk of Fr. Ring