



Wednesday Prayer

11th Sunday after Pentecost – For the healing of all nations

***May God be merciful to us and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.
Let your way be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.
Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
Psalm 67:1-3***

In Sunday's gospel lesson, Matthew 15:21-28, a Canaanite woman begins shouting at Jesus because her daughter is tormented by a demon. She cries out for mercy, begging Jesus for his help. But she is an outsider, a non-Jew, and she is annoying in her pleading, so the disciples urge Jesus to send her away. In one of his most shocking displays, Jesus tells the woman that it's not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs! She responds, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table. Jesus answers, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for as you wish." Her daughter is instantly healed. On the surface, the initial response from Jesus is shocking and ugly. What a horrible thing to say to a desperate woman! But he is being provocative, and what he ultimately accomplishes is making the point that there are no humans who deserve only the scraps given to dogs. He breaks wide open God's offer of inclusion, love, blessing, and salvation for all people.

I've been thinking today about children at our southern border. Children who have been separated from their parents, and who, by all accounts, have been living in squalor, deprived of basic necessities, neglected, and abused. It is a tragic moment in our nation's history, and we are complicit in the exploitation of children. We've heard the callous dismissal of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants, who have been vilified by many of our political leaders. But we are people of faith, and we know better. Let us be diligent in our work of preventing the sexual exploitation of children. Let us never forget that all children, no matter their nation of origin, are worthy of far more than scraps from the table. To learn more and join with the ELCA's strategy to Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities, visit <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/AMMPARO>.

The Psalmist asks for God's saving health for ALL nations. God's love has no borders.

God of abundant love, help us listen to the pleading cries of your people, and give us the courage to join you in bring about the healing of all nations. In your gracious and loving name we pray, amen.

Written by Deacon Erica Larson, Director of Faith Formation at Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church.