

*13 February 2025 - Thursday of the 5th ordinary week*

[Gen 2:18-25; Mk 7:24-30](#)

### HOMILY

This Gospel reveals many things to us, both about the person of Jesus and about prayer. Moreover, our attitude to prayer generally reveals quite well the image we have of God and of Christ.

If our god is the god of the philosophers, an unchanging god who never changes, there is really no reason to pray to him. If our Christ is a Christ who, from the moment of his birth, already possesses the full beatific vision and cannot grow in knowledge and awareness of His mission, a Gospel like today's shows us a disconcerting Christ, who uses very harsh words towards a poor pagan woman.

But if we accept what the Gospel tells us in so many ways - that Jesus, throughout His life, grew in age, in grace, in wisdom and also in the perception of His mission - then this Gospel takes on a meaning that is very beautiful. It means that Jesus' encounter with another person who confronts Him with his desires helps Him to discover His own mission. It means that we ourselves, poor human beings, can in some way 'change God's mind'!

Up until this point in His life, Jesus had only preached to the Jews, and the reception of His message had become increasingly difficult, as we have seen over the last few days. He therefore decided to leave Jewish territory and go to the region of Tyre. When the Syro-Phoenician woman asked Him to heal her daughter, He refused, because He had only been sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. He uses an image of a family where the bread is served to the sons and not to the little dogs running around the table. There is an opening in this image that the woman skilfully seizes. She puts her foot, you might say, in the doorway and cleverly replies that the little dogs can feed on the crumbs that fall from the table and that they therefore belong in some way to the family. Faced with such faith, Jesus understands that this woman, like all those who have a similar faith, also belong to God's household and that He has therefore been sent to them too. And He healed her daughter.

All the great spiritual figures in the Bible are people full of desires, who are not afraid to express those desires to God, even forcefully. Their prayer is that of lovers who love enough to desire, without trying to manipulate the loved one, but hoping all the same that the person's desires correspond to their own. This is a path of

Document extrait du [site de l'abbaye Notre-Dame de Scourmont](#), qui se trouve sur le territoire de Forges, à sept kilomètres au sud de la ville de Chimay, en Belgique. Notre-Dame de Scourmont est une abbaye de l'Ordre Cistercien de la Stricte Observance.

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spiritual growth, because it offers the possibility of an encounter with God, even if this encounter may take the form of a confrontation.

It's like a child who, by expressing his desires, is confronted with the reality of the world around him and thus has the opportunity to grow in this confrontation between his desires and those of the rest of the world. A child who does not express his desires may appear to be very wise, but he does not grow up.

The woman in today's Gospel took a great risk in expressing her desire: the risk of receiving a negative response. This confrontation changed her relationship with Jesus. And the wonderful thing is that, in any deep relationship, both people are changed. In this relationship too, Jesus gave and received.

So let us not hesitate to come before God with our desires and our needs, certain that, in this encounter with God, our desires may not be fulfilled exactly as we wish, but our relationship with God will be changed. And that is the ultimate purpose of prayer.

Armand Veilleux