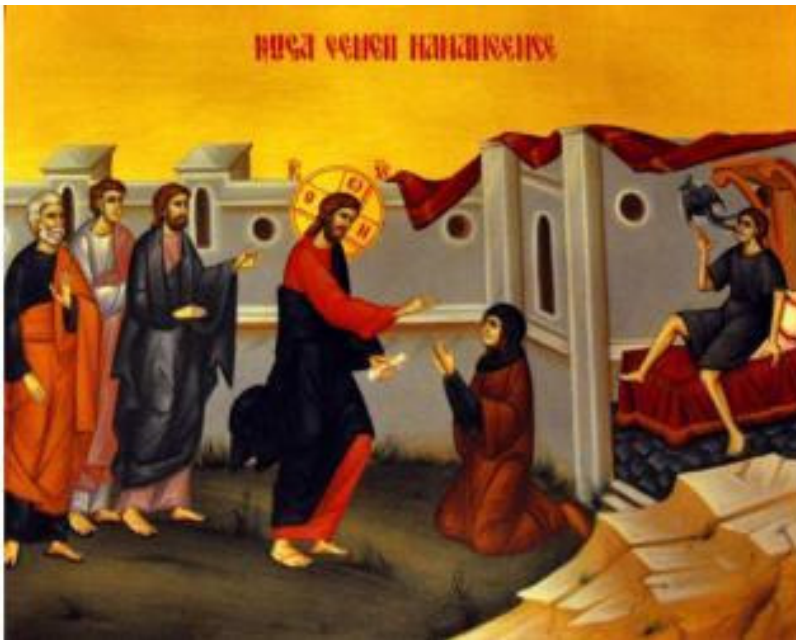


## January 29, 2017: The 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Of the Canaanite woman)

### Epistle reading: II Cor. 6:16-16, 7:1:

*"And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty." Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*

### Gospel reading: Matthew 15:21-28:



*"Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out*

*after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour."*

The Gospel reading of this Sunday is a good argument for intercessory prayer, the prayer offered on behalf of others. The woman of Canaan (another "foreigner") is pleading

with Christ for His divine mercy on behalf of her daughter who was "*severely demon-possessed.*" At some point, even the disciples intervene and offer their own intercessory prayer on behalf of the Canaanite woman: "*Send her away, for she cries out after us.*" It is this particular instance which strengthens our belief in the prayers and intercession of the saints on our behalf.

The other aspect of this story is the persistence of this woman. At first, her cry for help is ignored, then she is refused again and in the end she is likened to the dogs: "*It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.*"

My question is: at what point would we have given up and disrobed ourselves of whatever faith we had, concluding that God (if He existed) was unmerciful and unloving? As I often say, all prayers are heard but not all are answered. Sometimes we are praying for the wrong thing or for the wrong reason. Other times we pray very superficially and only when we need something specific, expecting instant results. What about the people who pray regularly and earnestly and their prayers still go unanswered for a long time? The story of the Canaanite woman is teaching us that sometimes God just wants to put our faith to the test.

Let us engage in fervent prayer, asking for God's mercy and help, saying: "*Have mercy on me, O Lord!*" and "*Lord, help me!*"

**Fr. George Bazgan**

### **Sunday Fellowship**

**The following families are scheduled to look after  
this Sunday's fellowship:**

**Popa Paul & Roxana  
Potlog Daniel & Ionica  
Luca-Dămian Gabriel & Gabriela**

**Thank you all very much!**

**Altar boys for this Sunday:**

**Alexander Ștefănescu  
Alexandru Mustea**

***Valentine's Supper & Dance***

**On Saturday, February 11, 2017, there will be a  
Valentine's Supper and Dance at the Romanian Center.  
Supper will be served at 7:00 P.M.**

**For tickets (\$40.00/adults, \$10.00/children) and details,  
call Luminița Ștefănescu at 780-424-2437.**

***ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING***

**The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for  
February 19, 2017, after the Divine Liturgy.**

**On the Agenda:**

- Financial and other committee reports.**
- Election of a new Church Board.**

**Members in good standing will be able to vote.  
All are invited to attend.**

**PLEASE, PLAN TO ATTEND!**