

“It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs!”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, a six-year-old was allowed to stay at a friend’s house for supper. When everyone was seated, she bowed her head and waited for someone to begin to say the grace. After a bit, when no one did, she looked up and, sheepishly, observed:

“Gee, you’re all like my dog; you just start right in!”

Jews of our Lord’s time felt that same way about Gentiles—the non-Jews. To the Jews, Gentiles were spiritual dogs.

“Why so?” you ask.

Well, I am glad you asked that question!

Very simply, Jews felt (and observed) that Gentiles were grossly insensitive to God.

Now here’s an interesting point about today’s Gospel, which I just read to you from St. Matthew. The word Jesus used for **dog** refers to a ‘pet dog’ or even a ‘lap dog,’ as opposed to a ‘street dog’ or ‘attack dog’. The woman’s response recognizes this rather affectionate use of the word for dog, for she says in her reply, kind ‘a with a smile in her voice, I would expect:

“(Well), couldn’t you slip a little food to me, just as a little boy slips food from the table to his ‘pet dog’ when his parents aren’t looking?”

One purpose of this parable is to impress upon us the importance Jesus places on our ‘faith’ in him. Our **faith** is something like one’s physical health. Even the most physically, healthy person has bad days. That’s just the way human life is.

For example, on **one** day, life is depressing. It’s an exasperating experience. We find fault with everyone and everything. We curse at our enemies, shout at friends, and ‘snip’ at our loved ones.

For example, on **another** day, life is exciting. It’s an exhilarating experience. We love everyone and everything. We forgive our enemies and hug our friends and loved ones.

FAITH can be like this, too! On one day, it’s bright and exciting. **BUT**...and there’s that proverbial **BUT** in life, on another day, it’s, i.e., **our faith**, dark and exasperating.

The next time you have a **‘bad-faith-day,’** call to mind this true story.

“Once upon a time, shortly after the end of WWII, workmen were clearing debris from a bombed-out house in Cologne, Germany. On one of the cellar walls, they found this moving inscription, written there, apparently, by a fugitive Jew, who had used the basement to hide from the Nazis. Regardless, this is how the inscription read:

***‘I believe in the sun—even when it’s not shining.
I believe in love—even when I don’t feel it.
I believe in God—even when he is silent!’ ”***

I close with this prayer.

Heavenly Father, our Abba:

Give us patience for the times... we even disappoint ourselves.

Give us strength to remember you still love us... even on our ‘bad-faith-days.’

Give us courage... to live through the days you are silent.

Give us a forgiving heart... for youngsters who feed pets under the table.

And finally, help us always remember... to say grace before meals.

May Almighty God, our Abba, who knows all, sees all, and understands all, bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.