

# TRINITY NEWS

## Pentecost 9 Gathering Broken Pieces

When people have received the elements of bread and wine plus a dash of water at the Eucharist, the priest consumes the wine and the broken pieces of bread that are left over.

The broken pieces, the crumbs, have always seemed to me to represent a gathering up of the broken pieces of the lives of those who have participated. Some symbols remain in the mind.

We may come to worship broken by the circumstances of our life. But the real Celebrant of the Eucharist, the Master Celebrant, knows about brokenness. He was broken at the Cross. Blood and water poured out of his wounded side according to the Fourth Gospel. Utter dereliction would describe the state of Jesus on the Cross, especially in the primary gospel of Mark. The Last Supper, re-enacted in our liturgies, is linked to the Cross. The wine and the water represent a connection with his “life in the body” (Nepesh). Another way of saying “this is my body” in setting apart the bread would be to say, “This is what I am to you.”

The woman, a Syrophenician, comes from a proud people, coastal dwellers and seafarers. But the desperate needs of her tormented child bring her to Jesus. The suffering of her daughter goes beyond her pride. Brokenness links people to Jesus.

The account in Matthew emphasises the way in which Jesus at first rejects the woman, ignoring her pleas. She is also rejected as a Gentile, explicit in the statement that is not fair to give the bread that rightly belongs to the children of Israel to dogs, that is, to Gentiles. We do not know whether it is the Jewish exclusivism of Matthew or Jesus that is showing at this point. That is, in the way the dialogue is constructed. The woman refuses to be put off, and adopts a humble approach, saying that even dogs feast on the crumbs that fall from the masters’ table. Jesus’ response in Mark 7:29 describes this as *logos*, a word of the Gospel. The heart of the Gospel is to be freed from affliction. Here Jesus commends the woman on her faith and perseverance. The unclean spirit leaves the girl and she is healed immediately. Restoration follows perseverance and humility.

All the healings in the Gospels are drawn forward into the ultimate healing of the Cross, vindicated in the Resurrection. Every illness healed, every one consoled, every one relieved of heart-rending concerns, every one suffering alone in silence without support is drawn into the Cross and lifted up in Resurrection. Nothing is written in the New Testament without this in view. Every “process” is drawn into this transformation. They knew the end of the story, or rather its next stage. What happened to the Syrophenician woman and her daughter after the encounter with Jesus? Did they remember him? He would always remember them.

Bishop Arthur Jones

### TO PLAN:

August 16, Tuesday.

- Bible Study, 10am
- Discussion, 7:30pm-9:00pm, Parish Hall

August 18, Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel

### NEXT WEEK:

August 22, Monday.

- Vestry Meeting, 6:30pm

### NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS:

Isaiah 51:1-6; Psalm 138;

Romans 11:33-36; Matthew 16:13-20