



## *Reflection from Deacon Ross 8/16/2020*

This past week opened a new page in the history of these United States. A major political party nominated a black woman for Vice President. That is a first, but there are other “firsts” that came along with it. In addition to her father being from Jamaica, Kamala Harris’s mother is from India. Furthermore, she is married to a man who is Jewish. In Kamala Harris’ first-hand experiences there are multiple nationalities, ethnicities, religions and cultures!

What an expression of the global reality of our interconnected world! However, a few generations ago such an experience would be rare if not impossible. Modern communication and transportation have brought people together in ways that were unimaginable in centuries past. The question then becomes, how have we adapted to living with such diversity?

In the biblical times reflected in today’s readings there was awareness that people who were “different” would come into other people’s lives. The question at that time was not only about the “other” and their relationship to “me,” but it was even more so about the “other” and their relationship to my God! My God was for “my people.”

In this Sunday’s reading from the Prophet Isaiah (56:1, 6-7), God instructed the Jews that even foreigners could share in their prayer and receive mercy. Where people came from or how they worshiped would not stand in the way if they loved God and wanted to follow God’s precepts.

In the gospel (Mt 15:21-28) we see Jesus traveling into foreign, gentile territory. When a gentile woman approached him and asked a favor, Jesus’ reaction was similar to that of other Jews at that time. At first Jesus ignored her. Then he told her that he was sent only to the people of Israel. Finally, after the woman’s continued insistence, Jesus responded to her request to heal her daughter. “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” The woman’s faith, and her love and care for her daughter, overcame any difference

of nationality or religion.

The gentile woman and her daughter were treated by Jesus with love and mercy. The offerings and prayers of the foreigners reported by Isaiah were acceptable to God: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all." Finally, St. Paul, himself apostle to the Gentiles, reminds us (Rom 11:29-32) that "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable," that God "might have mercy on all."

In our global and interconnected world we come into contact with people from all places, all religions, all ethnicities, all cultures. The scriptures tell us that all are children of God; all are acceptable to God. Let's celebrate that and show each person that they are acceptable and they are welcome in our homes, our churches and our lives.

All are made in "the image and likeness of God." We celebrate the Divine Diversity of the children of God.

*Blessings, Deacon Ross*