



There are times when we watch the news or read the newspapers, and we will hear or read that someone had used the *N word* and were being harshly criticized for the use of such a hateful filled language. The effort to remove such a painful and hurtful word from use is a good thing. Gratefully, I think there is less language of ethnic insults used today than when I was a child. We rightfully feel upset when we hear any kind of ethnic slur used against another person. As a child, and to this very day, I have been corrected by my parents and good friends when I say something such as *I hate the Yankees, or I hate Bill Maher or I hate Brussel sprouts*. I have been told that *hate* is a word that should not be used so casually by me. They are right of course and I have tried to correct this with some rare exceptions, hating is bad quality to have in our lives. I try to now say: *I do not like the Yankees, or I can't stand Bill Maher*. Hate is a powerful word, and one that should not be used very often in our speech.

Far worse than the use of the word *hate*, is when this feeling grows in our heart, and even more destructive when it moves us to use negative words, say terribly mean things, and do hurtful actions toward another person or a group of people. Although I think the word *hate speech* can be easily politized, and free speech is a core value of the American Constitution, being a follower of Jesus would call us to avoid by his grace all speech and actions that would hurt another person.

We look at the hate we have just observed in Barcelona, Spain in a recent act of terrorism. We know well the reality of such hate as we ourselves experienced the evil of hate on September 11, 2001. The recent events in Charlottesville Virginia reveal hatred in the hearts of many people.

The Jewish people of the Old Testament historically had a great disdain and hatred for Canaanites. They had battled for centuries over the land of Canaan. We still such bitterness between many Arabs and Jews. Jesus was raised as a devout Jew. No doubt, as a child in the synagogue, he was taught how the Canaanites had warred with the Jewish people. So, in our Gospel today, we see an encounter of Canaanite woman

who asks Jesus to set her daughter free from a demon. Jesus says he will not do this. This is perhaps the one of the very few times when we see Jesus say no to a suffering person. It is a moment for Jesus to teach his disciples and world about this mission. He has been sent to announce the Good News of Salvation to the Jews and then to the rest of world. The woman is so persistent in her demands for healing for her daughter that the apostles tell Jesus to send her away; they can't take her *wailing*. *In the harsh idiomatic language of the Semitic language, Jesus tells her, "It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs."* It is very direct way of saying Salvation is first to be given to the Jewish people. It is certainly a harsh rebuke from Jesus. But like any mother whose daughter is in pain, she will not be thwarted: *"Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters."* The faith of the woman moves Jesus to cure the woman's daughter. God's plan of salvation changes because of a conversation between a loving man and suffering woman. *"O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."*

We are followers of Jesus. We seek his Gospel to transform our hearts. We take his body and blood here at this holy Eucharist and seek healing and strengthen. We pray that we never allow the demon of hate toward any person or people ever take possession in our hearts. *Jesus set us free from all that divides us. Free us from hate. Our faith in Jesus will saves us.*