

## Homily for the 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity Matthew 15 21 to 28

There's a rather nice link between our coming back into church and our Gospel reading today. That link is a theme of unity. Of being together as family. I guess we have all felt the pain of separation during the lock down and in a way we still feel the threat that at some time we may well have to go back into something similar. However, whatever may lay ahead, today we are united as family. If you watch families being reunited at airports it involves hugs and kisses - sadly that's not possible now but in our heads I'm sure that's what we are doing. So I send you all my hugs and kisses at being together again.  
P T L Praise the Lord!!!

### Story

There was once a shipwreck and four people managed to reach a desert island. When they were rescued they proudly showed their rescuers around their little settlement. "Look" they said "here are the houses we made for ourselves and here are the two churches we built." "Two churches?" the rescuers said. "Why two?"

"Well this one is our church." They replied, "and that one over there is the one we don't go to."

I wonder does that remind you of any situations??

So this morning as we think about our own togetherness perhaps we can see how easy a sense of belonging can become a matter of "us" and "them."

Our first reading from Genesis is a very familiar story.

It's a story of jealousy and betrayal among brothers.

Something to do with a favourite son and a multi-coloured coat.

Remember how:-

Joseph's brothers were jealous of him, so they sold him as a slave and told his father he was dead. But Joseph was taken to Egypt where he impressed Pharaoh with his ability to interpret dreams and predict a famine. So while all around are starving, Joseph is in charge of food storage and distribution in Egypt, and thanks to him the people of Egypt are doing fine.

Joseph's starving brothers come to Egypt in search of food. They kneel before him, but they don't realise that he is the brother they sold as a slave.

Joseph tests their love and decides to forgive them.

Music:-

The second reading is about "us" and "them."

Jesus was a Jew.

The Jews called themselves "The house of Israel."

Jesus' followers thought of him as "One of us."

Jesus calls the house of Israel his lost sheep and himself as their shepherd.

The other people, the Canaanites, were definitely not "one of us!"

I guess in a way the Jews were in a way jealous and suspicious of their worldly, pleasure-seeking ways.

Then a woman from Canaan comes asking for help for her sick daughter.

Her faith seems to open up the monopoly of the house of Israel and Jesus says:-

"Woman, great is your faith!

Let it be done for you as you wish."

Both stories have this theme of "them" and "us."

That is people being shut out and then welcomed in!

Joseph's brothers resented him so much that they got rid of him.

When they begged from him in Egypt he could have sent them away empty-handed.

But instead he welcomed the whole family back with open arms and invited them to share his good life.

The woman was initially shunned by Jesus he said she was nothing to do with him but her humility

and faith won through and she was welcomed into the those who received his help.

So what do these stories tell us today?

I think they remind us that past ill-treatment and grudges can cause us to shut people out.

Maybe you have felt that at some time.

Just as a feeling of they are "not one of us" or not "Our sort" of people.

Maybe at some time in our church we have felt excluded or maybe unwittingly we have been one of those on the inside, shutting people out.

Or putting it another way not making people feel welcome.

Our church walls separate the inside from the outside.

Our church from Rastrick.

During that last few months we have been separated from the inside of our church, maybe like me you have been left feeling shut out.

But today we are tentatively back home and that feels good.

Maybe like Joseph and his family and the Canaanite woman you feel included part of the family again. United once more!

Music is a wonderful symbol of unity. Voices and instruments can join together to create a harmony. (excluding me!)

The Psalm for today says:-

"How good and pleasant it is to dwell together in unity."

Perhaps it's not as it used to be here in church.

Perhaps we are not able to express our unity as we would like.

But at home and in church we are together as family.

So "How good and pleasant it is to dwell together in unity."