

Mark 7:31-37

Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done all things well,' they said 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

"And the Word became flesh" (John 1:14) Jesus' cure of a nameless deaf-mute in the district of the Decapolis becomes a sign of the new times. All those who up to the present have been deaf, can now hear his word, confess that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, and go into the world to proclaim the good news, in their turn, and sing his praises. "He has done all things well." He chooses "those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promises to those who love him." All barriers down, he assembles them around the table of the Word and the Bread shared in thanksgiving.' (Days of the Lord Year B)



TWENTY THIRD SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Year B

5th September 2021

Signs of the Times in Pagan Lands



Today's miracle is a parable. It has a spiritual lesson for us all. Like the deaf man we too should be asking Jesus that we might hear, that we might speak. That we will hear the Word of God made flesh in Christ Jesus, and that hearing the word of life we will proclaim, share our joy, the good news of life to all.

LORD, THAT I MAY HEAR!

Opening Prayer

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance.

Isaiah 35:4-7

Say to all faint hearts, 'Courage! Do not be afraid. Look, your God is coming, vengeance is coming, the retribution of God; he is coming to save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy; for water gushes in the desert, streams in the wasteland, the scorched earth becomes a lake, the parched land springs of water.

Isaiah began his ministry in Jerusalem in 740 B.C. Israel & Judah were living under the threat of Assyrian invasion. Isaiah's mission was to announce the fall of Israel and Judah as the due punishment for their unfaithfulness. However, God would not abandon them. Isaiah foretells a future age in which a remnant of the people will survive to rebuild peace and justice under a future descendant of David. This theme is picked up in today's reading. It tells of the overwhelming joy of creation at the coming of God.

"It's good to be reminded that Christianity is a religion of joy and that the central matter for rejoicing is the very fact of the coming of God to share our state... Christ did away with suffering in that he showed that God himself was willing to share our sufferings, to make them part of himself... Because of this he not only took the sting out of it, but enabled us to make our suffering a means of joy in God. If God loves us so much that he will share the grief in his creation, it turns all grief into joy in God's love."

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Psalm 145(146):7- 10

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free.

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down. It is the Lord who loves the just, the Lord, who protects the stranger.

The Lord upholds the widow and orphan but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age.

James 2:1-5

My brothers, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose a man comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor man comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed man, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats'; then you tell the poor man, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest.' Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that?

Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him.

Last week we began a series of readings attributed to James, 'the brother of the Lord', the head of the church in Jerusalem. Rather than a letter, these passages originated in the liturgy as exhortations, homilies addressed to Jewish converts. Today's passage needs little explanation. As followers of the Lord Jesus, we must imitate God's impartiality, loving all, rich and poor alike, as brothers and sisters.

Alleluia, alleluia! Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
you have the message of eternal life. **Alleluia!**

(Gospel overleaf)

Prayer over the Offerings

O God, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace, graciously grant that through this offering, we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty and, by partaking of the sacred mystery, we may be faithfully united in mind and heart.

Prayer after Communion

Grant that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life.