

JESUS HEALS THE DEAF MAN

MARK 7: 31-37



Our attention today is drawn to the second reading, which criticises the treatment of the rich man who enters the synagogue, compared to the poor man who enters the exact same time. The temptation is to look at the gold ring and the fine clothes and to give him the best seat in the house.

The poor man is filthy and is told to stand somewhere out of the way or even sit on the floor. This reading nicely links in with last Sunday's Gospel reading, where the poor man is looked upon as defiled or unclean, and therefore unworthy of God's attention. This beautiful reading from James places the poor man at the centre of the temple, for those who are poor in the eyes of the world have been chosen by God to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom God promised to those who love him. Once again, we have a teaching that promotes equality and gets rid of division.

We move then into the Gospel reading where the same teaching abides. Jesus is face to face with a deaf man who has a speech impediment. Since the man is a Gentile, he is regarded by Orthodox Jews as unclean or unworthy. Jesus cures his deafness and his stutter. The crowd note that the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled: "the ears of the deaf are unsealed ... and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy." ■

LEARN

In opening the man's ears and mouth, Christ is foreshadowing His call for all humankind to hear the Word and respond in faith. (Pope Benedict, 2012)

DO

As a parish community, let us begin to reflect how we practice hospitality to the stranger. What ministries are in place to reach out to the newcomer?

SAY

Loving Father, touch me now with your healing hands, for I believe that your will is for me to be well in mind, body, soul and spirit.

(Padre Pio)

REFLECT

It could well be that Jesus Christ came on earth to say only this one word, Ephphatha; it is certainly being said to each one of us who hear God's Word today. This word from Aramaic, can be translated as follows: Be open wide: open to everything, with everything, for everything. Don't be blind, don't be deaf, don't be dumb. Sharpen every one of your senses to experience the world as it is, in all its glory.

So let us listen and be challenged by these words from Max Warren (1963):

Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we find ourselves treading on another's dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God was there before our arrival. We have to try to sit where they sit, to enter sympathetically into the pains and griefs and joys of their history and see how those pains and griefs and joys have determined the premises of their argument. We have, in a word, to be 'present' with them."

In telling us to be open, Christ enters our world and our lives, sitting with us sympathetically. In this encounter, we see God for what he truly is. Loving and compassionate. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right;
treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

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.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
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.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 145 (146):7-10

Response:
My soul, give praise to the Lord, or Alleluia!

1. 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. (R.)

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

3. 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. (R.)

SECOND READING

James 2:1-5

A reading from the letter of St James.
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.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

GOSPEL

Mark 7:31-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.
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."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Like the deer that yearns for running streams,
so my soul is yearning for you, my God;
my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

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.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not healing, not curing; that is a friend who cares.

Henri Nouwen