

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (B) (2021)

A) CURE OF A DEAF MAN WITH AN IMPEDIMENT

- The man whom Jesus cures in today's Gospel is suffering from a double affliction
- he is deaf, and he is unable to speak clearly
- so he is experiencing a double kind of isolation
- he cannot understand what people are saying to him, nor can they understand what he is trying to say to them.
- but he has friends who bring him to Jesus and who make a request on his behalf
- Jesus could cure him without a word and without touching him at all
- but instead he uses outward signs, putting his fingers in the man's ears and spittle on his tongue, probably so that in these ways the deaf man can understand what is going on
- the use of spittle as a curative device was common among Greek and Jewish healers at that time
- the deaf man is fully cured
- and the reaction of the onlookers is to praise God
- Jesus tries to restrain them, because his true identity will be revealed not in his miracles of healing but in his death and resurrection
- but we are told that their admiration was unbounded
- "He has done all things well," they said, "he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."

B) MIRACLE A SYMBOL OF BAPTISM

- we can understand this miracle of Jesus as a symbol of baptism
- just as Jesus used words and gestures to bring about a miracle,
- so the sacraments of the church use physical signs and gestures to express spiritual realities
- before we are baptised, we are spiritually deaf: unable to hear God
- and we are spiritually dumb: unable to praise him
- but the sacrament of baptism gives us spiritual hearing and spiritual speech
- in fact, the words and gestures of Jesus in today's Gospel are sometimes used in rite of baptism
- the priest touches the ears and mouth of the candidate and says The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb speak.
- May he soon touch your ears to receive his word,
- and your mouth to proclaim his faith,
- to the praise and glory of God the Father. Amen.
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C) IN THE MASS WE LISTEN AND SPEAK SPIRITUALLY

LISTEN: to scriptures, especially the Gospel
Also prayers and hymns
We are attentive to the example of others

RESPOND: in praise of God
Responsorial psalm
Alleluia
Bidding prayers
Preface and Eucharistic Prayer
Speaking of God's wonders, not to remind him but to remind
ourselves of what God has done for us: he has done all things
well

D) IN PERSONAL LIVES WE CAN DO THE SAME

- ATTENTIVE TO God's presence in events, people, things we read or see on TV
- In Night Prayer: we praise and thank God for the good things he has done for us and enabled us to do during the day
- At the end of Mass the priest may say to us
- "Let us go and announce the Gospel of the Lord;" or
- "let us go in peace, glorifying the Lord by our lives"
- So these exhortations remind us that in our everyday living, whether we realise it or not, we can be bearing witness to the values of the Gospel

E) QUOTATION FROM ST. AUGUSTINE:

F)

Augustine uses all five senses to describe how God communicated with him when he was at his lowest, and how Augustine responded:

You called and cried to me and broke open my deafness:
and you sent forth your beams and shone upon me and chased away my
blindness:

you breathed fragrance upon me, and I drew in my breath and do now
pant for you:

I tasted you, and now hunger and thirst for you:

you touched me, and I have burned for your peace.

(Confessions 10,27)

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