

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

September 6, 2009

Gospel: (Mark 7: 31-37)

Jesus left the district of Tyre and returned by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Ten Cities. Some people brought him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. Jesus took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his fingers into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and emitted a groan. He said to him, "*Ephphatha!*" that is, "*Be Opened.*" At once the man's ears were opened; he was freed from the impediment, and began to speak plainly. Then he enjoined them strictly not to tell anyone; but the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. Their amazement went beyond all bounds: "He has done everything well! He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Reflection:

In living the gospel, rather than simply bringing others to Jesus *we ourselves* are the presence of the risen Christ who bring healing and salvation. If we are to be the embodiment of God's saving power then we must open our ears to hear and recognize all the everyday opportunities for making God's presence and reign known. This might be something so simple as turning off the TV and spending some time in the family listening to each other. Or it might be something so demanding as choosing to work fewer hours, and have less money available, in order to more present to others. However we respond to other's needs, it is helpful to remember that we do embody God's offer of salvation through the good we do. (Living Liturgy, p.206)

Vincentian Meditation:

St. Vincent tells us that humility is a grace of our Lord Jesus. Humility only comes when the light of Jesus penetrates deeply into our being and into all our thinking and reflection. When that light does penetrate into us, it transfigures everything, not only our opinion about ourselves but our attitude towards others. With humility God will be glorified, the poor will be served and made happy, and we ourselves will enjoy the grace and peace of Jesus Christ, who is gentle and humble of heart. (McCullen, *Deep Down Things*, p.586)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

How have you brought healing and have been the "presence of Christ" to others?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, as you opened the ears of the deaf man:

-open our ears to hear the cries of the poor.

Jesus, as you removed the speech impediment of the deaf man,

-give us the grace to speak of your love to others.

Jesus, let your light penetrate into us,

-transfiguring our opinion about ourselves and our attitude towards others. Amen

