

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom

and healed all who were sick.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mk 7:31-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

He makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.

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.

Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / B

05 SEPTEMBER 2021

JESUS THE DIVINE HEALER

At the heart of our life of faith is the belief that God has the power and desire to enter into our world and bring life where there was death. Prophets such as Isaiah spoke of the impact that the Messiah would have on the life of the people. Through the promised king, God would reach out and set right what was no longer in order; wrongs would be redressed and life would flourish anew in the desert, and in the hearts of the people. How many of Isaiah's contemporaries would have thought his words were simply vain hopes which would never be realised? How many were disillusioned with their past experience of kingship in Israel?

It was into this situation of need, hope and disbelief that Jesus came. His powerful word and healing touch brought hope and new life to those in need. One of the great ironies of today's miracle is Jesus' command that the deaf man keep silent about what has happened to him. Having just found his voice could he be expected not to use it? Mark's point is that having encountered Jesus we cannot keep silent.

Despite its brevity the letter of James contains some of the most hard-hitting teaching in the New Testament. Today the challenge concerns how the voice of the powerless cannot be silenced in the Christian community. The standards of the world have no place in the Christian community when it leads to a distinction between rich and poor, when a person's worth and dignity is only measured by their wealth.

FIRST READING

Isa 35:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Then the ears of the deaf shall be opened and the tongues of the dumb speak.

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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 145:7-10. R. v. 1

R. Praise the Lord, my soul! (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.

Has not God chosen the poor of the world to inherit the kingdom?

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.

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