

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 8, 2024: Is 35:4-7a | Ps 146:7-10 (1b)
| Jas 2:1-5 | Mk 7:31-37

Pray: Jesus, open my ears and heart to love and follow you more closely each day. Amen.

Open Your Heart with the Word of God and the Healing Grace of His Sacraments.

“Ephphatha” – Be opened! Jesus used this command to heal the deaf man with a speech impediment. Jesus performed (and still performs) many miracles without any tangible contact with the beneficiary; however, the Church believes that the signs and gestures He used to heal the man that day laid the foundation for the Seven Sacraments.

He continues to give us His healing and sanctifying graces through His “touch” offered in the Sacraments, normally through clergy as His instruments. In the Sacrament of Baptism, for example, the Church includes this ephphatha rite, asking that the newly baptized become open to the Word of God in his or her life.

Among crowds of people, many who were seeking healing, Christ chose this man to heal. What about all the other people who were flocking to Jesus, hoping to be healed, that did not get chosen for immediate healing? Did it mean He didn’t care for them? Not at all. Jesus loves everyone and was present with them, too, just as He continues to be with all those whose hearts are open in trust to His love, truth, and grace.

Jesus’ gift of healing comes in different forms in the perfect timing and way we need, whether for



our body or soul. We must believe and follow Jesus, the Son of God, and His teachings as we live our lives, love Him wholeheartedly, and trust in His perfect love and saving grace.

Just as the deaf man was healed in this Gospel’s miracle story, Christ continues to encourage all believers to “be opened” to the healing graces and spiritual nourishment of His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the healing Sacrament of Penance. We trust that the form of healing that God will grant us through our belief in Christ the Healer will always be what God, who loves us for eternity, deems best for our soul.

Reflect & Discuss:

- † How have you experienced God’s healing presence in your life or witnessed it in someone else?
- † How has God used you as an instrument of healing for another person?
- † How can we demonstrate that we are trying to “be open” to God’s sanctifying graces in our lives?