

Homily Summary – 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Introduction: God desires to give good things to His people and show His love for us, no matter our sins. This love is illustrated through Jesus' many miracles and healings, such as the healing of the deaf man in today's Gospel.

Key Points:

1. **Healing of the Deaf Man:** Jesus takes the man aside privately, touches his ears with His fingers, and places His saliva on the man's tongue, saying “ephphatha,” which means "be opened." This intimate, personal healing highlights the depth of Jesus' compassion and power. The use of saliva, thought to have healing properties in the ancient world, symbolizes Jesus' divine ability to heal.
2. **Fulfillment of Prophecy:** Jesus' actions fulfill the Old Testament prophecy from Isaiah 35: "Here is your God... He will come and save you... the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped..." Jesus, acting as the person of God, often brings healing and fulfills God's promises.
3. **Personal Application:** Like the man in the Gospel, we may also be "deaf," "mute," or "blind" in different ways — unable to understand, hear, or see God's purpose or our own value. In times of feeling isolated or unheard, Jesus wants to touch us and say, “be opened,” enabling us to truly see, hear, and speak. “Jesus, please show me a way right now in which you want to heal me personally.”
4. **Baptism Connection:** During Catholic baptisms, the minister says “ephphatha” over the newly baptized, praying for them to hear God and speak His Word throughout their lives. This signifies Jesus' desire for each of us to be spiritually open to His guidance.
5. **Update on recent Diocesan Seminar:** A recent seminar attended by over 100 priests discussed ways to improve the Church and parishes. The upcoming report, “Forward Together in Christ,” will address areas such as better communication, leveraging technology, and involving parishioners more deeply in Church work. Bishop Lobsinger highlighted the growing Catholic population alongside a decline in the number of priests, emphasizing the need for laypeople to get more involved. Priests need your help!
6. **Hospitality and Community:** The seminar also focused on enhancing hospitality, creating learning opportunities, and encouraging laypeople to help more in their parishes. The Gospel healing story inspires us to step up, share the Good News, and work together in a spirit of openness.
7. **Inspiration from Cardinal LaCroix:** Cardinal LaCroix shared how even financial meetings could start with Bible reading and reflection, showing that small acts of faith can transform relationships with God and each other. He shared how this changed his diocese and things have gotten better through this.

Reflection Questions:

- Have I ever invited Jesus to touch me and make His presence known in my life?
- Am I open to hearing God's voice and sharing His message with others?
- How can I contribute more actively to my parish community?

Quotes to Ponder:

- "Ephphatha — be opened." (Mark 7:34)
- "Here is your God ... He will come and save you." (Isaiah 35:4)

Call to Action: Give Jesus permission to touch and heal you where you need it most. Be open to His guidance in your daily decisions, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. As you encounter Christ's healing, share His love with others in both word and action. “Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 13:34)

Prayer: "Jesus, I give you permission to touch me and heal me where I most need it. Help me to hear, see, and speak the Good News through my faith. May all who meet me experience Christ's light, warmth, and peace. Please show me my place in your Church."