

23rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - SEPTEMBER 9, 2018

SUNDAY'S READINGS - EXCERPTS TO PLACE IN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

First Reading:

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened,
the ears of the deaf be cleared. (Is 35:5)

Psalm:

Praise the Lord, my soul! (Ps 146) or Alleluia.

Second Reading:

Did not God choose those who are poor in the world
to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom
that he promised to those who love him? (Jas 2:5)

Gospel:

Then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him,
"Ephphatha!"-that is, "Be opened!"

And immediately the man's ears were opened. (Mk 7:34-35a)

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WEEKLY READINGS AND OBSERVANCES - ENGAGE PARISHIONERS IN DAILY MASS AND PRAYER

Readings for the Week of September 9, 2018

Sunday: Is 35:4-7a/Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10 [1b]/Jas 2:1-5/Mk 7:31-37

Monday: 1 Cor 5:1-8/Ps 5, 5-6, 7, 12 [9]/Lk 6:6-11

Tuesday: 1 Cor 6:1-11/Ps 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b [cf. 4]/Lk 6:12-19

Wednesday: 1 Cor 7:25-31/Ps 45:11-12, 14-15, 16-17 [11]/Lk 6:20-26

Thursday: 1 Cor 8:1b-7, 11-13/Ps 139:1b-3, 13-14ab, 23-24 [24b]/Lk 6:27-38

Friday: Nm 21:4b-9/Ps 78:1-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38 [cf. 7b]/Phil 2:6-11/Jn 3:13-17

Saturday: 1 Cor 10:14-22/Ps 116:12-13, 17-18 [17]/Jn 19:25-27 or Lk 2:33-35

Next Sunday: Is 50:5-9a/Ps 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 [9]/Jas 2:14-18/Mk 8:27-35

Observances for the Week of September 9, 2018

Sunday: 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time; Grandparents Day

Monday: - - -

Tuesday: Patriot Day

Wednesday: The Most Holy Name of Mary

Thursday: St. John Chrysostom, Bishop & Doctor of the Church

Friday: The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Saturday: Our Lady of Sorrows

Next Sunday: 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

GOSPEL MEDITATION - ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

September 9, 2018 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

"Jesus ? went by way of Sidon ? into the district of the Decapolis." For most of Jesus' ministry, he remains in Galilee and areas with a predominantly Jewish population. Today, however, we see Jesus traveling through a heavily pagan area. This makes the utterance of faith in today's Gospel all the more astounding. "He has done all things well."

In this story, a deaf man is brought to Jesus. This man is not without community! Despite communication difficulties due to a speech impediment, his people bring him before Jesus. Jesus lays hands upon the man and commands his broken body to change. "'Be opened!' Immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly." The community is stunned. They can't stop telling the story. The more Jesus asks them to settle down, the more they proclaim! The Jewish people expected a Messiah but a Messiah with very particular qualifications. The Greeks and pagans anticipated no such savior. There were no expectations to meet. They had a special capacity to be completely, utterly surprised.

As Catholics, it can be easy to become accustomed to the songs and the prayers, to the routine of religious education drop-offs and Sunday Mass attendance. By now, we may have very particular expectations. When was the last time you allowed yourself to be surprised by God? Sometimes we are all like the deaf man in today's Gospel. God wants to speak to us, but we can't hear clearly. In your prayer this week, go before God honestly. Give yourself permission to drop your expectations and assumptions. Ask Him to renew your faith to show you how, in your life, "He has done all things well."

LIVE THE LITURGY - INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

We often associate the word "healing" with something that produces dramatic, physical results: the blind see, the crippled walk, and the deaf hear. Witnessing such miraculous events is few and far between for most. Healing happens more frequently in very ordinary ways using very ordinary means. And we can all be God's instruments for bringing it about. Kindness, love, mercy, and compassion can go a very long way. Treating people with kindness ? being inclusive and welcoming of the poor, the weak, and the powerless ? listening to another's story and pain ? offering compassion and love to those who have wronged us ? avoiding hurtful criticisms and watching our tongues. All can go a long way to changing and healing human hearts. There is power in love and kindness. Does this power not speak of someone greater than ourselves working in and through us?

EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP - RECOGNIZE GOD IN YOUR ORDINARY MOMENTS

I love watching replays of great sports highlights. Sometimes you see something so extraordinary that you tell others they have to see it to believe it. The one-handed catch, the in-the-park home run, and the photo finish are all examples of these types of moments. They are amazing feats that boggle the mind.

I wonder how many people in biblical times saw Jesus perform miracles and told others they wouldn't have believed it unless they saw it with their own eyes. Of course, we believe the stories of his miracles, and we didn't see them in person. We do believe them, don't we?

There is no television program that features replays of the actual miracles Jesus performed 2,000 years ago. However, there are miracles every day for the world to see. Many of those come about by allowing God to work through us. People are waiting to be healed and fed, and mountains are waiting to be moved. There might not be a replay for these miracles either. However, people will be amazed by the power of God. Jesus said we could do these things if we had faith. Blessed are those who believe but who have not seen. Furthermore, blessed are those who perform great works with God so that others may see.

--Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - INVITE PARISHIONERS TO REFLECT AND RESPOND TO SCRIPTURE

First Reading

Nearly 800 years before the birth of Christ, Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would come to save and heal his people. We hear Jesus fulfilling this prophecy in today's Gospel reading. Why do you think God waited 800 years to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy?

Second Reading

James warns of the dangers of showing partiality for the rich over the poor. Why does this remain a challenge for believers even today?

Gospel Reading

Why do you think Jesus ordered the people who witnessed his healing of the deaf man with a speech impediment not to tell anyone?

CATHOLIC QUOTES - WORDS TO INSPIRE THE FAITHFUL

Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears.

--Charles Dickens

WHY DO WE DO THAT? - CATHOLIC LIFE EXPLAINED

Question:

If God is good, why is there evil in the world?

Answer: The problem of evil is perplexing. If God is all-powerful and all-good, why doesn't He stop bad things from happening? He must either not be all-powerful, or perhaps He's not very good after all. Human beings have faced the possibility of evil since the very beginning of our existence. In granting us free will, God gives us the ability to make free choices. God does not force us into moral perfection. We are not forced to love Him or to love our neighbor. We must make the decision ourselves. This means, of course, that we have the ability to choose against love.

One small decision of selfishness, jealousy, or pride may not seem so bad. But every decision -- good or bad -- is like a stone dropped into a still pond. The ripples extend much farther than the original stone. When decisions against love begin to compound, they affect families, neighborhoods, and nations. This is all the more reason for Christians to be faithful to our baptismal call to love one another as Christ has loved us!