

## **Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time – 09/05/21**

“Thus says the Lord: Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared...”

At baptism the priest or deacon touches the ears and mouth of the child to be baptized with his thumb saying: “May the Lord Jesus, who made the deaf to hear and mute to speak, grant that you may soon receive his word with your ears and profess the faith with you lips, to the glory and praise of God the Father.” It’s referred to in the rite as the Ephphatha.

The origins of the rite are from what we heard in the gospel today when the people brought Jesus the deaf man with a speech problem.

Jesus took him aside and put his finger in his ears and touched his tongue, 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.

Our ears were opened to hear spiritual things at our baptisms but not only our ears but our eyes as well.

Our eyes were opened to let the eternal light of Christ in so that our intellects could safely guide us in the way of Truth.

It's not that any of us left behind the material world. We still have physical bodies so we need to live in the world accordingly but the material world around us is fading away and cannot claim all our attention.

In a real sense we were given new eyes and new ears to see and more importantly to know what lies beyond this life and the fleeting pleasures promised herein.

These are the eyes and ears of faith.

But we can thwart this grace when we put too much hope in the material world.

This world cannot save us. Science, medicine, all the money in the world will not be able to save us. Only God can save us.

We all know this. I'm not telling anyone anything new. However, even though we say that we know do we not sometimes live as if we do not know?

That's wherein lies the problem – saying we believe one thing while basically living the opposite.

It's an unfortunate fact today that there are many Catholics in the pews week-in-and-week-out throughout the whole world who really don't embrace the fullness of the Faith.

They pick and choose what they believe and essentially leave with a hybrid of the Faith – a hybrid that cannot save them.

Many of them eventually accept the false notion that one religion is as good as the next and consequently just as able to save as the next.

Then the eyes and ears of faith are blurred and deadened at best and the light of Christ begins to dim in the hearts of individuals and in the world around us.

Only fear is left in its wake but it doesn't have to be this way. It's not the way Jesus Christ intended it when he founded His Holy Catholic Church.

It is his will that everyone come to know the Truth and be saved.

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