

XII TRINITY 2014
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
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ST. MARK 7. 31

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We see...we hear...we taste...we smell...we touch...and we do all of these without giving it much thought.

When something happens to one of the five senses...another one of the senses often gets better and sharper...to help relieve the burden that might come with the impairment.

In this age of technological miracles, hearing aids and cochlear implants help people to hear better...devices help people with speech impairments speak...artificial limbs help with mobility.

The man in today's Gospel had none of the technological miracles we have today. Making matters worse, his contemporaries purposely avoided him. He was a virtual pariah...an outcast...making life easier for him is not something people would have even considered. Life weighed him down.

It's likely he was born with these impairments. His inability to hear words would have made his speech very difficult to understand. It would have not been easy for him to find work or maintain relationships. But, some people cared enough for him to bring him to Jesus.

Most people absurdly believed the man was deaf and couldn't speak because he or one of his relatives or ancestors had done something offensive...some terrible sin...and God was therefore punishing him. Jesus clearly says this is the wrong attitude about God. God wants no one to be hurting. Jesus listened patiently to the man's needs and reached out to make him whole.

The Gospel doesn't say he could then speak better; it says he could speak PLAINLY. Not only could the man HEAR, he could SPEAK without any trouble, as if he had always been able to do so, and people understood him. Jesus restored him to the community.

What Jesus did made the prophecies from Isaiah that foretold that blind people will see and deaf people will hear, and from Ezekiel that people will get back the power of speech and be able to talk come true. Today's technology that helps people live fuller and richer lives is also a blessing from God.

Jesus wants to help us sort things out. He wants to help us deal with the physical burdens we all experience...and we all do...some more than others...and those things that get in our way that make us spiritually blind and deaf and mute.

Saint Mark tells us Jesus took the man aside...away from the crowd...to heal him. Jesus wasn't interested in putting on a show. It was never about him. He then told the people who were there to keep quiet...don't go shouting about town about what you have seen.

Unlike the man in today's Gospel, we are under no such restrictions to keep quiet. In fact, we are told to go out and tell others the Good News. Our mission is to figure out how we can best accomplish the telling.

Our parish has embarked on a restoration process that is full of enthusiasm and hope for the future. But we cannot rely solely on a colorful website, newsletters, banners and signs, or "someone else", to get the message out to the community. Each of us must add our personal touch.

We must tell others what we know to be true...Jesus is the one we can go to when we are tired from carrying life's heavy loads and he will give us rest! He will give us comfort and strength. He will help us sort things out.

We see...we hear...we taste...we smell...we touch. Let's give some serious thought to how we can use our five senses in telling the Good News to others.

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