

[123] **TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME B**

FIRST READING

Then the ears of those who are deaf shall be opened
and the tongues of those who are mute shout for joy.

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

35:4-7a

The people were worried.
So the Lord told Isaiah to say to them:
Cheer up! Don't be afraid.
Your God is coming to punish your enemies.
God will take revenge on them and rescue you.

The blind will see,
and the deaf will hear.
The disabled will leap about like deer,
and tongues once silent will shout.
Water will rush through the desert.
Scorching sands will turn into lakes,
and thirsty ground will become fountains.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

146:6d-7, 7c-9a, 9bcd-10

R. (1b) Praise the Lord, my soul!
or:
R. Alleluia.

God always keeps his word.
he gives justice to the poor
and food to the hungry.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!
or:
R. Alleluia.

The Lord sets prisoners free
and heals blind eyes.
he gives a helping hand
to everyone who falls.

The Lord loves good people
and looks after strangers.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

or:

R. Alleluia.

He defends the rights
of orphans and widows,
but destroys the wicked.
The Lord God of Zion
will rule forever!
Shout praises to the Lord!

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

or:

R. Alleluia.

SECOND READING

Has not God chosen the poor of the world to inherit the kingdom?

A reading from the letter of James

2:1-5

My friends,

if you have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ,
you won't treat some people better than others.

Suppose a rich person wearing fancy clothes and a gold ring
comes to one of your meetings.

And suppose a poor person dressed in worn-out clothes also comes.

You must not give the best seat to the one in fancy clothes
and tell the one who is poor
to stand at the side or sit on the floor.

That is the same as saying that some people are better than others,
and you would be acting like a crooked judge.

My dear friends, pay attention.

God has given a lot of faith to the poor people in this world.

He has also promised them a share in his kingdom

that he will give to everyone who loves him.

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

See Matthew 4:23

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom
and healed all who were sick.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Jesus has made those who are deaf hear and those who are mute speak.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark

7:31-37

Jesus left the region around Tyre
and went by way of Sidon toward Lake Galilee.
He went through the land near the ten cities known as Decapolis.

Some people brought to him
a man who was deaf and could hardly talk.
They begged Jesus just to touch him.

After Jesus had taken him aside from the crowd,
he stuck his fingers in the man's ears.
Then he spit and put it on the man's tongue.
Jesus looked up toward heaven,
and with a groan he said,
"Effatha!" which means "Open up!"
At once the man could hear,
and he had no more trouble talking clearly.

Jesus told the people not to say anything about what he had done.
But the more he told them,
the more they talked about it.
They were completely amazed and said,
"Everything he does is good!
He even heals people who cannot hear or talk."

The gospel of the Lord.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME Cycle B

Prayer:

Dear Jesus,

Please help us to hear and speak the way that you do. We know that it will be hard but we also know that with your help we can do anything!

In your name I pray,

Amen

Readings:

Isaiah 35:4-7a

Psalm 146:6d-7, 7c-9a, 9bcd-10

James 2:1-5

Mark 7:31-37

Reflection:

Today's Gospel tells the story of Jesus healing a man who is deaf and who could not talk very well. In the story Jesus puts his fingers in the man's ears and spits and puts it on his tongue to heal him. It sounds kind of gross but He is trying to teach us all something. He is using His own body to help the man hear and speak better. He does this for each of us, too, especially when we receive Holy Communion. Close your eyes, pretend Jesus is standing right in front of you. He wants you to hear and speak just the way that he does so he touches your ears and your mouth (don't worry about the spitting part). Can you feel Jesus touch your ears and your lips? Open your eyes.

What does it mean to hear and speak like Jesus? Let's play a little game to give us some examples.

Activity:

Begin with all of the children standing in a line at one end of the room. The teacher stands at the opposite end. Read a scenario. If they would hear or speak the way Jesus would they can take one step forward. If they wouldn't they take one step back. The goal is for everyone to make it to the other side of the room. It is not a race. Here are some sample scenarios that can be used. You can add more that apply to your specific group. Talk about each scenario so that the kids recognize how Jesus would hear and speak.

1. You are watching your favorite cartoon after a long day at school when your Mom asks you to help set the table. You jump right up to help her because you know that she has also had a long day at work and she is rushing to get dinner ready so she can get you to soccer practice on time.
2. You ask your sister to play catch with you but she says no. She sounds a bit sad and quietly goes to play Barbies in her room by herself. You follow her up to her room, ask her if she is OK and then play Barbies with her.
3. A kid on the playground calls another kid "stupid." You speak up and say that it is not nice to call names.

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4. You notice that the kid that sits near you in math class is struggling to understand the work. You say something to help them feel better and offer to help explain the work to them.
5. You hear your Dad telling another Dad about how busy the weekend is going to be with all of activities that are planned in addition to needing to get the yard work done. You offer to help your Dad in the yard.
6. Your soccer team loses a game. At the end of the game, one of your teammates is so angry they will not shake to other team's hands and say "Good game." You tell your team mate that they are not being a good sport.
7. Your teacher tells you about children who live in Africa who don't have food or clothing. You organize a fund raiser to help collect clothes and food for them.