

OT XXIII [B] (Sept 8)

Today's Scripture readings from Isaiah, James, and Mark give us two challenges: 1) Ask God's help to open our spiritually blind eyes, deaf ears, and free our mute tongue. 2) Share in Jesus' healing ministry by lending to him our eyes, ears, tongues, and hearts.

In the first reading, Isaiah introduces a God whose eyes are focused on the helpless and who heals the blind, the deaf the lame and the mute. The Responsorial Psalm (146) praises a God Who gives sight to the blind, raises the downtrodden, and welcomes strangers. The Second reading, taken from St. James' Epistle, reminds us that as sharers in Christ's healing ministry, we must practice Christian social justice by showing no partiality, - that is, not shaming the poor by denying their rights to favor the rich. Instead, we must practice Christ's option for the poor. Today's Gospel story explains how Jesus fulfills Isaiah's prophecy by healing a deaf-mute in six stages in an "audio-visual" way. Jesus i) separates him from the crowd ii) looks to heaven and groans iii) puts his fingers in the deaf man's ears iv) applies his own saliva to the mute man's tongue v) prays once again and vi) gives the command "Ephphatha!" or "Be opened!"

1) We need to pray daily for healing from our spiritual blindness, so that we really see God's presence in others, and act on what we see; from our spiritual deafness so that we will attentively listen to the word of God, hear the cry and needs of others, and meet them as far as we can, and end our spiritual muteness, so that we may be able to praise and worship God loudly and vibrantly during our family prayers at home and our liturgical prayers and hymns during the Holy Mass.

2) We need to recognize our share in Jesus' healing ministry by lending him our eyes, ears, tongues, hands, feet, our hearts, and all our talents and blessings so that he may use them for granting all sorts of healing to people around us in our homes, parishes, institutions, and society.