

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Mark 7:31-37

An old man is talking to the family doctor. "Doctor, I think my wife's going deaf." The doctor answers, "Well, here's something you can try on her to test her hearing. Stand some distance away from her without facing her and ask her a question. If she doesn't answer, move a little closer and ask again. Keep repeating this until she answers. Then you'll be able to tell just how hard of hearing she really is." The man goes home and tries it out. He walks in the door and asks, "Honey, what's for dinner?" He doesn't hear an answer, so he moves closer to her. "Honey, what's for dinner?" Still he gets no answer. He repeats this several times, until he's standing just one foot away from her. Finally, she answers, "For the eleventh time, I said we're having meat loaf!"

He took him away from the crowd. He touched his ears and his mouth and said, "Be open". And the man left singing the praises of God to the world.

This is the miracle story you just heard in today's Gospel.

It is a story with baptismal overtones, because during baptism the priest touches the persons ears and mouth and says, "Be open."

This is a story about our lives with the Lord.

Today, there is a great deal of noise in our lives. Interesting word, noise. It even sounds bad. NOISE. Say the word out loud enough and you get a headache.

There is so much noise in our lives, but not just in the sense of sound. There is noise in the sense of disturbance--like static on the phone line.

The radio, the TV, the phone, the kids, the neighbors, those driving down the street with their radios cranked so high that **you** vibrate when they go by, are all audio noises, but there is also noise, disturbance, created by the continual worrying about tomorrow, the hanging on to the battle stories of the past. Noise. Noise. Noise.

Noise in our lives: "Did you see what she was wearing? To Church of all places? Guess who just broke up? Noise, Noise, Noise.

The phone rings, "You have a tremendous opportunity to save money now on your insurance, just press 1 for more information or to speak to one of our agents." **NOISE.**

And Jesus took the man away from the crowd, away from the noise. He took him to have a personal encounter with the Messiah. He calls us away from the crowd too, away from the noise to His quiet. Quiet before the Lord is so important. A little time to get away from the noise so He can touch us.

He touched the man's ears and he said, "Be opened."

He calls us to hear. Hear the still small voice Elijah heard, whispering that God loves us and has a plan and a purpose for each one of us.

Hear the whisper of Christ on the cross, telling us in the darkest moments of our lives that we will get through this together. Hear the voice of Mary, reassuring the concerned wine steward at the wedding feast of Cana, and reassuring us, saying, "Do whatever he tells you."

Hear the voice of our conscience within, calling us to the new life of the Lord's love, calling us to holiness. Hear the Word of God, alive in the Bible, proclaimed in the Church, proclaimed **by** the Church.

Hear the Word of God proclaimed by the loving husband and wife in their continual gifts of themselves to each other, proclaimed by parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, all good people, giving themselves to their children and to others who need help. Hear the Word of God. He touches our ears and says, "Be Opened."

Then He touched the man's mouth and said, "Be opened".

He tells us not to be afraid to stand up for our beliefs and our lifestyle, even if we are told that we are not in concert with modern society.

He says that he needs our voices. He needs us to proclaim that he is indeed alive. He opens our mouths to proclaim His praise to the world.

He drew the man away from the crowd. He touched his ears and his mouth and he said, "Be opened." And the man left proclaiming the love of God.

He touched him. He touches us. So let us stand now and proclaim Him by professing our faith.....I believe.....