



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 9 September 2018

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

This Sunday's Gospel passage (cf. Mk 7:31-37) refers to the episode of the miraculous healing by Jesus of a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. They brought to him a deaf and dumb man, beseeching Him to lay a hand upon him. Instead, He performed two different gestures upon him: first of all He took the man aside, far from the crowd. On this occasion, as on others, Jesus always acts with discretion. He does not want to impress people; He is not seeking popularity or success, but wishes only to do good to people. With this attitude, He teaches us that *good is to be done without clamour*, without ostentation, without "blowing one's trumpet". It should be done quietly.

When they had drawn aside, Jesus put his fingers in the deaf man's ears and touched his tongue with saliva. This gesture refers to the Incarnation. The Son of God is a man inserted into human reality: he became man; therefore he can understand another man's distressing condition and intervene with a gesture which concerned his own humanity. At the same time, Jesus wanted to make it understood that the miracle occurred because of his union with the Father: for this reason, he looked up to heaven. He then sighed and said the decisive word: "*Ephphatha*", which means "Be opened". And immediately the man was healed: his ears were opened, his tongue was released. For him the healing was an "opening" to others and to the world.

This Gospel narrative emphasizes the need for *a twofold healing*. First and foremost the healing from illness and from physical suffering, in order to restore bodily health; even though this aim is

not completely achievable on the earthly plane, despite the many efforts of science and medicine. But there is a second, perhaps more difficult healing, and it is healing from fear. Healing from the fear that impels us to marginalize the sick, to marginalize the suffering, the disabled. And there are many ways to marginalize, even by showing pseudo compassion or by ignoring the problem; we remain deaf and dumb to the suffering of people marked by illness, anguish and difficulty. Too often the sick and the suffering become a problem, while they should be an occasion to show a society's concern and solidarity with regard to the weakest.

Jesus revealed to us the secret of a miracle that we too can imitate, becoming protagonists of "*Ephphatha*", of that phrase 'be opened' with which He gave speech and hearing back to the deaf and dumb man. It means opening ourselves to the needs of our brothers and sisters who are suffering and in need of help, by shunning selfishness and hardheartedness. It is precisely the heart, that is the deep core of the person, that Jesus came to "open", to free, in order to make us capable of fully living the relationship with God and with others. He became man so that man, rendered internally deaf and mute by sin, may hear the voice of God, the voice of Love that speaks to his heart, and thereby in turn, may learn to speak the language of love, transforming it into gestures of generosity and self-giving.

May Mary, the One who completely "opened" herself to the Lord's love, enable us to experience each day, in faith, the miracle of "*Ephphatha*", in order to live in communion with God and with our brothers and sisters.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father added:

Dear brothers and sisters, yesterday in Loreto, at the Pontifical Shrine of the Holy House, the Feast of the Nativity of Mary was celebrated, and the proposal of spirituality for families was launched: the House of Mary, House of every family. Let us entrust to the Blessed Virgin the initiatives of the Shrine and those who will participate in them in various ways.

Today in Strasbourg, the Beatification of Alphonse Marie Eppinger, Foundress of the Sisters of the Most Holy Saviour is being proclaimed. Let us thank God for this courageous and wise woman who, through suffering, silence and prayer, witnessed to God's love especially to those who were sick in body and in spirit. A round of applause for the new Blessed, all together!

I greet you all with affection, people of Rome and pilgrims from different countries: families, parish groups, associations.

I greet the faithful from the Diocese of Como, the young participants in the meeting promoted by *L'Opera della Chiesa*, the confirmands from Prevalle, Italy.

I wish you all a happy Sunday. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.

Arrivederci!

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