



The Holy See

LEO XIV

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Saint Peter's Square
Wednesday, 30 July 2025

[Multimedia]

Cycle of Catechesis - Jubilee 2025. Jesus Christ our hope. II. The life of Jesus. The healings. **12. *The healing of a deaf man with a speech impediment. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."* (Mk 7:37)**

Dear brothers and sisters,

With this catechesis, we conclude our journey through the public life of Jesus, marked by encounters, parables, and healings.

This time in which we live also needs healing. Our world is marked by a climate of violence and hatred that demeans human dignity. We live in a society that is becoming ill due to a kind of "bulimia" of social media connections: we are hyperconnected, bombarded by images, sometimes false or distorted. We are overwhelmed by countless messages that stir within us a storm of contradictory emotions.

In this scenario, it is possible that within us arises the desire to turn everything off. We may come to prefer not to feel anything anymore. Even our words risk being misunderstood, and we may be tempted to close ourselves in silence, into a lack of communication where, despite our closeness, we are no longer able to say to one another the most simple and profound things.

In this regard, today I would like to reflect on a passage from the Gospel of Mark that presents us with a man who cannot speak or hear (cf. Mk 7:31–37). Just as it can sometimes happen to us, perhaps this man chose not to speak anymore because he did not feel understood; he chose to shut off every voice because he had been disappointed and wounded by what he had heard. In fact, it is not he who goes to Jesus to be healed, but others bring him. One may think that the people who take him to the Master are concerned about his isolation. The Christian community, however, has also seen in these people an image of the Church, which accompanies each person to Jesus so that they may listen to His word. The episode takes place in pagan territory, so we are in a context where other voices tend to drown out God's voice.

Jesus' behavior may initially seem strange, because He takes this person aside (v. 33a). In this way, He seems to emphasize his isolation, but on closer look, it helps us to understand what lies behind the silence and closure of this man, as if Jesus had perceived his need for intimacy and closeness.

Before anything else, Jesus offers him silent closeness, through gestures that speak of a profound encounter: He touches this man's ears and tongue (cf. v. 33b). Jesus does not use many words; He says only what is necessary in that moment: "Be opened!" (v. 34). Mark uses the word in Aramaic—*Eph'phatha*—as though to let us hear, almost "in person" its sound and breath. This simple and beautiful word contains the invitation that Jesus addresses to this man who had stopped listening and speaking. It is as if Jesus were saying to him: "Be opened to this world that frightens you! Be opened to the relationships that have disappointed you! Be opened to the life you have given up facing!". Closing in on oneself, in fact, is never a solution.

After the encounter with Jesus, that person not only begins to speak again, but he does so "plainly" (v. 35). This adverb, inserted by the Evangelist, seems to suggest something deeper about the reasons for his silence. Perhaps this man had stopped speaking because he felt he was saying things the wrong way, perhaps he felt inadequate. All of us experience what it means to be misunderstood, to feel that we are not truly heard. All of us need to ask the Lord to heal our way of communicating, not only so that we may be more effective, but also so that we may avoid wounding others with our words.

To begin speaking correctly again is the start of a journey, it is not yet the destination. In fact, Jesus forbids that man from talking about what has happened to him (cf. v. 36). To truly know Jesus, one must complete a journey; one must remain with Him and also pass through His Passion. When we have seen Him humiliated and suffering, when we have experienced the saving power of His Cross, then we can say that we have truly come to know Him. There are no shortcuts to becoming disciples of Jesus.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us ask the Lord that we may learn to communicate with honesty and prudence. Let us pray for all those who have been wounded by the words of others. Let us pray for

the Church, that she may never fail in her mission to lead people to Jesus, so that they may hear His Word, be healed by it, and in turn become bearers of His message of salvation.

APPEAL

I renew my deep sorrow for the brutal terrorist attack that occurred during the night between 26 and 27 July in Komanda, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where over 40 Christians were killed in a church during a prayer vigil, and in their own homes. As I entrust the victims to God's loving Mercy, I pray for the wounded and for Christians around the world who continue to suffer violence and persecution. I urge those with local and international responsibility, to work together in order to prevent such tragedies.

On 1 August, the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act will be commemorated. Motivated by the desire to ensure security during the Cold War, 35 countries launched a new geopolitical chapter, fostering a rapprochement between East and West. This event also marked renewed interest in human rights, with special emphasis on religious freedom—regarded as one of the cornerstones of the then emerging architecture of cooperation “from Vancouver to Vladivostok.” The Holy See's active participation in the Helsinki Conference—represented by Archbishop Agostino Casaroli—helped to promote political and moral commitment to peace. Today, more than ever, it is essential to safeguard the spirit of Helsinki: to persevere in dialogue, strengthen cooperation, and make diplomacy the preferred path to prevent and resolve conflicts.

Greeting

I extend a warm welcome to the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those coming from England, Scotland, Ireland, Sweden, South Africa, New Zealand, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, and the United States of America. In greeting with particular affection all the young people present today who are participating in the Jubilee of Youth, I encourage you to open your hearts to God's healing love, so that you can become even brighter beacons of hope in the world. God bless you all!

Summary of the Holy Father's words:

Dear Brothers and Sisters, In our continuing catechesis on the Jubilee theme of “Jesus Christ our Hope,” today we conclude our reflections on Jesus’ public ministry with the healing of a deaf man who had a speech impediment. As we heard in the Gospel reading, in a gesture of closeness, Jesus took the man aside and healed him with his words and his touch. Today, many people isolate themselves in their desperation and seem to have lost their ability to communicate, perhaps because they have often felt wounded and misunderstood in their interactions with others. We are in need of moments of intimacy with Jesus so that we can hear him say, “Ephphatha,” meaning, “Be opened.” He enables us to look beyond our own troubles and to put our listening and communication skills at the service of others. Just as the deaf man’s friends brought him to Jesus, so we too are called to become witnesses of Jesus’ healing power and to bring others to him, so that they can listen to his words, experience his touch, be filled with hope, and be healed.