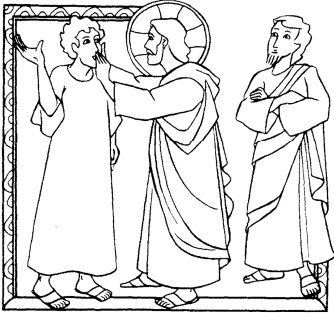


September 6th



23th Sunday of Ordinary Time

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray: God our Father, you redeem us and make us your children in Christ. Look upon us, give us true freedom and bring us to the inheritance you promised. Grant this...

FIRST READING

(In this reading we hear about Isaiah's prophecy about the effect of God's power in the life of the Israelites who are broken, wounded, deafened, and blinded by their own selfish lifestyle.)

A reading from the Book of Isaiah (35:4-7)

Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water. This is the Word of the Lord

PSALM (145)

Response: My soul, give praise to the Lord.

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. R./

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down, the Lord who loves the just, the Lord, who protects the stranger. R./

The Lord upholds the widow and the orphan, but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. Alleluia! R./

SECOND READING

(St James invites us to make no distinction between the poor and the rich while we share the power of God which is given to us by God himself. Earthly wealth or positions are no criterion for distinction in the Christian community. All are equal before God.

A reading from the Letter of St James (2:1-5)

My brethren, show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man with gold rings and in fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "Have a seat here, please," while you say to the poor man, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brethren. Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him?

This is the Word of the Lord

ACCLAMATION (Lk 21:36)

Alleluia! Alleluia! Watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to stand before the Son of man. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

(Jesus heals the deaf and dumb person with a personal touch. The people who witnessed this power went around proclaiming it. The utter amazement of the crowd is emphasized by their comment: "He has done all things well.")

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Mark (7:31-37)

Jesus returned from the region of Tyre, and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis. And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech; and they besought him to lay his hand upon him. And taking him aside from the multitude privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. And he charged them to tell no one; but the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."

This is the Gospel of the Lord