



The Bulletin Board

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

- Physical and spiritual deafness

The healing stories reflect Jesus' intimate, powerful relationship with God and his great compassion. He healed with words, touch and physical means. Physical deafness and spiritual deafness are alike; Jesus confronted one type in the man born deaf, the other type in the Pharisees and others who were unreceptive of his message. Jesus was concerned not only with physical infirmity but also spiritual impairment and moral deafness.

Our contemporary world has grown deaf to the words of Jesus, but it is not a physical deafness, it is a spiritual deafness caused by sin. We have become so used to sin that we take it as normal and we have become deafened and blinded to Jesus and his daily call to us.

If deafness and dumbness consist in the inability to communicate plainly with one's neighbour or to have good relationships, then we must acknowledge that each of us is in some way impaired in our hearing and speech. What decides the quality of our communication, hearing and speech is not simply to speak or not to speak or hear, but to do so or not to do so out of love.

We are blind and deaf when we show favouritism or discrimination because of the status and wealth of other people (see James 2:1-5). We fail to recall that divine favour consists in God's election and promises (James 2:5).

We are deaf when we do not hear the cry for help raised to us and we prefer to put indifference between our neighbour and ourselves. In doing so we oppress the poor and blaspheme the name of Christ (James 2:6-7).

Parents are deaf when they do not understand that certain dysfunctional behaviours of their children betray deep-seated cries for attention and love.

We are deaf when we turn inward and close ourselves to the world because of selfishness, pride, resentment, anger, jealousy and our inability to forgive others.

We are deaf when we refuse to recognize those who suffer in the world around us, and do not acknowledge glaring situations of inequality, injustice, poverty and the devastation of war.

We are deaf when we refuse to hear the cry of the unborn, of those whose lives are in danger because they are elderly, handicapped, and chronically ill, while others wish to end their lives out of misguided mercy

“Ephphatha, Be opened!”

The early Church was so impressed by the healing miracle of the deaf man that it attached deep significance to it, incorporating the Lord’s action into the Baptismal Rite of new Christians. To this day, the minister of baptism puts his fingers into our ears and touches the tip of our tongue, repeating Jesus’ word: “Ephphatha, Be opened!” He has made both the deaf hear and the dumb speak



Father Hunger

Each year we celebrate “Father’s Day”, a day on which we’re asked to get in touch with gratitude we should feel towards our own fathers. For some of us this is easy, we had good fathers; but for many it’s difficult. If we had an absent or abusive father, we tend to go through life always unconsciously seeking something that has been withheld from us, namely, our father’s approval. This leaves us inhibited, often angry, and hungering for a father.

“Father-hunger, the hunger to be affirmed and blessed by our own fathers, by someone who represents him, is today perhaps the deepest hunger in the world, especially among men. Not enough people have been affirmed and blessed by their own fathers or the father figures in their lives.”

Ron Rolheiser OMI.