

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES
September 5, 2021
Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
Isaiah 35:4–7a † James 2:1–5 † Mark 7:31–37



Reflection by: Dyann Brown, OPA

Today's gospel from Mark centers on Jesus' healing of a deaf and mute man from Decapolis. Having heard of Him from other regions, the citizens of the district brought the man to Jesus to be cured. What is notable in this gospel are a couple of things—how Christ heals this man and what He tells the people not to do after the miracle.

First, Christ takes this man away from the crowd for a private interaction. His actions of placing his fingers into the man's ears and spitting and touching the man's tongue—culminate with His praying out loud, "Ephphatha" (Be opened). Taking the man away from the crowd was our Lord's way ensuring that after the miracle, He was not perceived as a healer-on-display.

Second, after the man's disabilities were removed, our Lord enjoined the people to secrecy about the healing. What was His purpose of holding back such an awesome event? It was never Christ's role to be an itinerant healer performing public acts for an audience. And the secrecy of the miracle? Relegating our Lord as simply a healer would deny us Christians the opportunity with the faith-filled awareness of His divinity and authority—and later—death on the cross. It was about waiting for, per the prophesy of a new age to come and His revelation to the whole world, what His death and resurrection would mean then, now and forever—our salvation.

We don't follow Christ because He is a healer, but because he suffered, died and was resurrected for us. Let our ears be opened to His words of salvation and grace. Let our mouths be opened to worship Him because of His love for us.

We say in prayer and with devotion, we are "opened" to Him.