

Church of the Divine Love

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPER 18

SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

9:00 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

*Please observe silence after the candles are lit*

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #493 – **O for a thousand tongues to sing**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (S-280 in hymnal) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 35:4-7a**

Psalm 146

Second Lesson: **James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17**

Gradual Hymn #1 – **Father we praise thee**

Gospel: **Mark 7:24-37**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn #47 – **On this day, the first of days**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A page 361

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 362
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn – #602 – Jesu, Jesu	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833
Dismissal Hymn #603 – <b>When Christ was lifted from the earth</b>	
Dismissal	

### **Sermon Sunday September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

Isaiah 35:4-7a; Psalm 146; James 2: 1-10, 14-17; Mark 7: 24-37.

**“They brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment.”**

#### **Sisters and brothers in Christ,**

What do you lack? We may have sight and hearing, but what do we lack? Take an honest inventory of yourself. Have you found contentment? Are you close enough to God to receive his guidance and strength? Have you secured peace of heart and peace of mind, invaluable assets in life? Deciding what we lack is the first step in securing it. Christ can fulfill our needs, needs that are to some extent physical, but, more so, the deepest needs of heart, mind, and soul.

The man in Mark 7 lacked the physical ability to hear. But many of us lack the spiritual ability to hear. We suffer a kind of a spiritual deafness. The affliction of not listening to people, or, to put it another way, the affliction of physically listening to people, yet failing to comprehend, to understand, and come to grips with what they are saying, is a plague upon the Church. For, you see, it is possible to listen to a person, yet fail to really hear them. The gospel does not tell us much about this man. We don't know his name, where he is from, or what he does. We don't know when or how he became deaf. The only thing we know is that he is deaf and has a speech impediment.

This isn't simply a story about Jesus turning a particular deaf man into a particular hearing man. This is a story about each one of us. Deafness is the human story. This man could be anyone and, likely, he is everyone. He is every man. He is every woman. He is every child. He is you and me. Today's gospel is a story about one who was closed but is now open, one who was deaf but now hears, one who was dead but now lives. It is more about our heart than it is about our ears. It is more about spiritual deafness than it is about physical deafness. Hearing and deafness are not determined by our ears, but by what's in our heart; the way we love and relate to one another. The old Verizon commercial – “Can you hear me now?” – reminds us that it is all about the connection. So, it is for the man in today's gospel. So, it is

for us as well. We are either open or closed to the connection with God, one another, and the world. Sometimes we choose to be open or closed depending on people, places, and circumstances. We hear what we want to hear. Selective hearing.

Regardless of how it comes about, the tragedy of spiritual deafness is that the connection is broken. We can no longer hear the voice of God or another person. The only voices we hear are the ones in our heads. The only conversation we have is with our self. Spiritual deafness is ego centered. When we are spiritually deaf, we assume that ours is the only or the most important voice to hear. We are cut off from God and other people. We are closed to new ideas, understandings, and experiences. Unopen to new ways of thinking, behaving, and relating, we continue business as usual, and nothing ever changes. It is a lonely, isolated existence.

I can't help but wonder if spiritual deafness isn't one of the primary causes of conflict in our marriages and families, in our relationships with one another, in our nation, and in the world. It's not hard to see how deafness destroys relationships. We are deaf to the dignity of all human beings when we show favoritism and make distinctions based upon appearance, wealth, and status. We are deaf to the teaching of Jesus when judgment triumphs over mercy, and indifference rather than love defines our relationship with our neighbor.

We are deaf when we become self-occupied and self-enclosed because of pride, anger, jealousy, or the refusal to forgive another. We are deaf to our spouse and children when we are too busy or too self-important. We are deaf to God's justice when we refuse to recognize and do something for the poor, the hungry, the homeless, and those who suffer the devastation of war. We are deaf when agendas, prejudice, and assumptions tell us all we need to know. We are deaf when we have no need of another because his or her views, politics, religion, or lifestyle differs from our own. We are deaf when we choose not to listen to the cry of the unborn, the elderly, the disabled, the marginalized and oppressed. We are deaf to God's grace when productivity, winning, and profits determine our choices and guide our lives. We are deaf to God's presence when we refuse to be still, be quiet, and listen. Deafness abounds in today's world. Talking heads are a dime a dozen. Listening hearts are few and far between. So, what about us? What are the places in which we are closed? Where is our life disconnected? To whom or what are we deaf?

The cure for our deafness is not to hear but to be open. Hearing follows openness. "Ephphatha." That's what Jesus tells the deaf man. He doesn't say, "Now hear!" He says, "'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.'" He says the same thing to you and me. Jesus is always speaking, "Ephphatha," to the closed parts of our lives. Let our ears be opened to hear Christ's word of forgiveness of our sins and his love for us. Let our eyes be opened to see the beauty of creation and the possibilities God sets before us. Let our mouths be opened to speak the good news of what God is doing in our lives. Let our hands be opened to do the work God has given us to do. Let our minds be opened to new ways of thinking and understanding. Let our hearts be opened to love our neighbors as ourselves. Let our lives be opened that God might dwell in us.

"Ephphatha" is Jesus' prayer to God, his commandment to the deaf man, and his longing for all human beings. The openness to which Christ calls us transforms and heals our lives. It reconnects us to God and one another, offering new life, new beginnings, new hope, and new possibilities. ... "Can you hear me now? **Amen!**

15 PENTECOST

9:00 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

MONDAY 8:00 AM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

8:00 PM AA MEETING

SATURDAY 10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

16 PENTECOST

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

**Prayer for Grace and Favor:**

**Dear God, we ask that you provide for our needs, we ask for your grace and favor. We pray for your blessings to cover us; we pray that you would help us to prosper and make every plan that you have birthed in our heart to succeed. We pray that others would take notice of your goodness and could not help but say, "these are the ones that the Lord has blessed." Shine your light in us, through us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us. May all your plans succeed. We may reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing. In Jesus Name, Amen.**

**PARISH PRAYER LIST**

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

Girard Bishop	People of Haiti	Dorothy
Nathan Treadwell	John Loubengeiger	Chris Dickson
Michael Echevarria	Kate Jones	Del
Martinisi Family	Michael & Family	John Rocco
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	James
Julia	Mo (Rachael)	Warren
Bill Conklin Sr.	Anthony Paribello	Sylvia
Barbara Curran	Edward Lent & family	Laura
Christopher & his family	Taylor	Ciara
Gabriel	Aidan	Elodie
Victims of Wild Fires	Victims of Terrorism	Victims of Hurricanes

Help us to speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them.  
Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen.

The departed: Francisco Febres

