

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right;
treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption,
look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters,
that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom
and an everlasting inheritance.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Is 35:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
Say to all faint hearts,
'Courage! Do not be afraid.
'Look, your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you.'
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy;
for water gushes in the desert,
streams in the wasteland,
the scorched earth becomes a lake,
the parched land springs of water.
The word of the Lord.

RESP. PSALM

Ps 145:7-10

Response:
My soul, give praise to the Lord.
or
Alleluia!

1. 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.)

2. 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.)

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

SECOND READING

Jm 2:1-5

A reading from the letter of St James.
My brothers, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose a man comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor man comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed man, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats;' then you tell the poor man, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest.' Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that?
Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him.
The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mk 7:31-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.
Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done all things well,' they said 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'
The Gospel of the Lord.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,

true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O God, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace,
graciously grant that, through this offering, we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty
and, by partaking of the sacred mystery, we may be faithfully united in mind and heart.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Like the deer that yearns for running streams,
so my soul is yearning for you, my God;
my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant that your faithful, O Lord,
whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament,
may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts
that we may merit an eternal share in his life.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

ST. ETHELWOLD

May God the Father bless us,
may Christ take care of us,
the Holy Ghost enlighten us all the days of our life.
The Lord be our defender and keeper of body and soul,
both now and for ever, to the ages of ages.

EPHPHATA: BE OPENED

MARK 7:31-37



Today's Gospel story about how a man's speech and hearing are restored is framed by two short verses.

The opening verse mentions four places. Two of them, Tyre and Sidon, are on the coast. The Decapolis was a league of ten small independent city states. Most of them were on the far side of the river Jordan. Having Jesus go through them to get to the Lake of Galilee shows St Mark's shaky grasp of the geography of Palestine.

Mark tells the story of the cure briskly but with some unusual details. Jesus touches the man's tongue with saliva. Only in one other miracle story, the cure of a blind man, does Jesus use a natural substance (mud), for the miracle is worked instantaneously by a word of command or by a healing touch. The word of command that works the miracle, ephphata, is one of about a dozen words or phrases that the Gospel writers have been preserved in Aramaic, the original language of Jesus.

Another unusual word describes Jesus' prayer: "looking up to heaven, he sighed." That word could also be translated as "groaned." It conveys something of the intensity of the prayer of Jesus, as a moment of deep communication with God. The cure is immediate. Despite the command not to make the cure known, the more widely the news is broadcast.

Jesus' healing was one of the signs that he is the messiah. When John the Baptist sent disciples to ask Jesus whether or not he was the messiah, Jesus' answered by telling him to report what they had seen, that "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. (Mat 11:5). This fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah: "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy" (Isa 35:5-6). These words are read in the first reading of today's Mass. ■

REFLECT

This little story is recalled at every baptism. When he has baptised the baby and wrapped it in the white garment, the priest touches its ears and lips, recalling how "the Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the mute speak. May he soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth, to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father." This final moment of the baptism ceremony looks forward to the ways in which the baby will begin to hear the story of faith and to confess its belonging to Jesus in the words of simple prayers.

"Be opened" is a life-long call. To put it another way, baptism is the beginning of our journey towards openness. It is a journey that begins afresh every day. Open your mind by learning more about your faith. Open your heart to the poor and those in need. Open your mouth to praise God and to speak in defence of the down-trodden. Open your purse-strings to learn the joy of giving. ■

LEARN

A time of prayer is not just a time for talking to God. It is also a time for quiet listening with the heart.

Even if we find it hard to put our prayers into words, the Holy Spirit prays with us.

PRAY

Ask God to give you a heart that listens to the cry of those who suffer and to his mysterious presence in our world.

DO

Make some time each day just to wait in silence for the Lord to speak to you.

SAY

"O Lord, open my lips to sing your praise. Open my ears to hear your word of truth."

