



September 8, 2024

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 35:4-7a | Jas 2:1-5 | Mk 7:31-37

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

My first thought upon reading today's Scriptures is that by healing the deaf man, Jesus is fulfilling what God had said he was going to do since the time of the prophet Isaiah: "making the eyes of the blind see and opening the ears of the deaf," as we heard in the first reading. And indeed this is what Jesus did. But when I re-read the Gospel I was intrigued by the line: "[Jesus] took him off by himself away from the crowd." Jesus had a reputation as a healer and a teacher, so it stands to reason that he healed people in front of the crowds often. Why, then, does Jesus remove the man from the crowd? In a commentary on this passage, Bishop Robert Barron suggests that Jesus removed the man from the crowd as a way of demonstrating that the loud and boisterous voices of the crowd could make it hard to hear when God is speaking to us. Even though this man was deaf and was not able to hear Jesus' words, the crowds were a distraction, and a barrier to intimacy and communion. Doesn't this same thing happen to us from time to time? The voices in our world that compete for our attention can make it difficult to hear God's word. But it can be done, and the rewards are great. God is present with us; let's make an effort this week to focus in on the things in our lives that point us toward God and ready ourselves to receive his grace.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears and looked up to heaven before healing the deaf man. By this action, Jesus is doing the will of the Father, which is to bring healing. Let's consider the question about competing voices in our lives and what we can do about it. For starters, we can carve out a time every day to quiet our hearts so we can hear the "still, small voice of God." Away from the crowd, we can put our whole being into truly hearing God's voice and asking for the help we need to be in right relationship with him. He longs to give us what we need but we must be open to receiving his gifts and his peace. If we are "tuned into" God, we can hear his Word clearly and speak that Word to others with conviction.

PRAY For me, there is no better way to spend quiet time with our Lord than Eucharistic adoration. Prayer and devotion in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament transforms and heals. Give it a try.