

# **CELEBRATE SABBATH**

## **Sunday, Twenty Third Week in Ordinary Time**

**Forbearance is a mysterious mixture of mercy, sympathy, compassion, patience, endurance, forgiveness and strong will.**

### **Isaiah 35:4-7**

In this excerpt, we read about the Prophet's promise of healing, health, restoration, wholeness and transformation of a people who were broken, alienated and desperate. He shares with his people his vision of redemption in forms of health and well being. He says to those who are frightened and weighed down by this world's struggles, "Be strong, fear not! Here is your God"....Salvation will be experienced as sight for the blind, hearing for the deaf, healing for the lame, voice for the mute.....

Today, we live a world in which we need to hear these promises again. We need to hear and feel challenged by the promise of healing, health, peace, and wholeness.

**Be strong! Fear not! Dream Peace! Think Peace! Speak Peace! Pray Peace! Love Peace! Be a peacemaker!**

### **Psalm 146**

The Psalmist calls us to praise God, not just for an hour in song.....but with the whole of our being at all times and in all places. Because as the last verse says. "the Lord reigns forever" and His reign can be trusted. To reign is to care - verses 8-9 proclaim this confidence. **God is a God who keeps "faith" forever - He is the living God.** Therefore, God is worthy of our trust. The Psalmist calls all people to do what God does and that is the way we are to praise God. We are to learn to be like Him and do what He does.

**The Lord gives sight to the blind;  
The Lord raises up those who were bowed down.  
The Lord loves the just;  
The Lord protects the stranger.....**

### **James 2:1-5**

James challenges us to a concern and compassion for others, which takes us beyond our prejudices. He tells us that the faith of those who believe in Jesus must be lived out and expressed in every aspect of life and not mere words. He says, "Be doers of the word and not

hearers only" (1:22). This excerpt invites us to reach out to the less fortunate in the community. We are called to reach out to the poor and not show partiality to the rich.

**Let your faith reach out to the less fortunate in your community. Be open to all people!**

### **Mark 7:31-37**

Jesus went into the district of Decapolis which was largely a gentile territory. Jesus' ministry was open to all, not just to the Jews. This excerpt from Mark presents Jesus opening himself to people beyond Jewish circles.

Then we read about a man whom Jesus opened. People brought a deaf man to Jesus for healing. Jesus took him aside, away from the crowd, touched him and healed him. The man who was opened and the people who witnessed the healing went about opening themselves and proclaiming the good news that they came to know, in spite of beings asked not to tell anyone about this experience.

Isaiah's vision of hope for a fragile and broken world is now fulfilled in Jesus. The deaf-mute is set free from his handicap, from his inability to hear and communicate. It is interesting to note that the words of Jesus to the man were "be opened" rather than "be healed" or "speak" or anything similar. Jesus "opened" the man and freed him. A door that was closed and sealed was now open for the man....he was free! When one door closes another opens!

It is also interesting to note that Jesus asked the people to keep the healing of the deaf man "closed", not to tell anyone. Sometimes, it is prudent to be closed. We are invited to discern how closed and open we need to be in different situations. In this situation Jesus did not want publicity, didn't want to draw attention to himself. The authorities were on the watch for anything to entrap him. It was the prudent thing to keep the matter quiet.

**Be opened! Be opened to receive the good news and to proclaim the good news!**

**Be open to the Holy Spirit to help you discern how closed and open you need to be in different situations.**

**Saint of the Day, September 8 - Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and 27 other saints are remembered this day**

According tradition, this feast probably began with the consecration of the basilica of St. Ann in Jerusalem. The September birth was chosen because the Eastern Church begins its Church year

in September. The Birth has been assigned to September 8, both in the East and in the West, which is nine months after the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8. The feast was brought to Rome toward the end of the 7th century by Eastern monks. Gradually, it spread to the other parts of the West.

Scripture does not give us an account of Mary's birth. However, according to the apocryphal Gospel of James, Anna and Joachim, the parents of Mary, were infertile but prayed for a child. They received the promise of a child who would advance God's plan of salvation for the world. Although it is not an actual birth day, it is a way of honoring the gentle and holy woman who said "yes" to God's call and let God's word of love become flesh in her and make a gift of the "word-made-flesh" to the world. It is also a challenge and an inspiration for us to welcome God's word of love into our hearts and let it transform our life. Let us make this a joyful day for us and a day of blessing and grace for all we meet.

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