

Ears unstopped and mouth opened

Homily for February 10, 2023

1. Who Would I Be if I Did Not Have the Faith? We can be so familiar with and immersed in our Catholic heritage that we take for granted the truths we have received from our Catholic Church, much like most of us take for granted our ability to hear or speak. Today's Gospel gives us an opportunity to contemplate a man who from birth did not enjoy either of these common faculties. There are people who cannot embrace Jesus' revelation not because it isn't given, but because they are not prepared to receive it. Let us rejoice in the grace we have received and honor it with our fidelity. What type of person would I be (or soon become) if I didn't have the gift of faith to support, guide or mold my values?

2. Christ Is the Revelation of the Father and His Love: Christ revealed himself to this man, and his power gave him hearing and good speech. "Christ ... by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (Gaudium et Spes, no. 22). Inasmuch as we are deaf to divine revelation we are like this man. Unable to speak the message of the meaning of our lives, unable to give ourselves to God and others, life just passes us by. But if God touches our ears and tongue, if he cures and empowers us with his grace, our lives take on a whole new direction and significance. God does touch our ears and tongue, but we must embrace his grace and purpose in our lives.

3. We Are Witnesses to the World that Love Exists: Our Lord restored to this man the health of his ears and tongue. Christ thus revealed to him his real identity:

*"He, who is 'the image of the invisible God' (Colossians 1:15), is himself the perfect man"
(Redemptor Hominis, no. 10).*

How difficult his life must have been before this revelation! How hard must it have been for him to believe and love!

"Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it" (Ibid).

With his health restored, the man became an agent of God's redemption. Who could keep him silent now about this wonderful experience of his Savior he has had? How loved by God this man must have felt that day when Christ restored his health! This man believed and so he speaks! Why am I silent? Do I not know that as a Catholic I am to be a witness to the world that love exists?

Conversation with Christ:

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you!
You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you.
In my unloveliness, I plunged into the lovely things, which you created.

You were with me, but I was not with you.
Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you, they would not have been at all.

You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness.
You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness.
You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in a breath, and now I pant for you.
I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more.
You touched me, and I burned for your peace.
(The Confessions of St. Augustine)

Lord, open my heart to your love so I may be a convincing witness to the world that your love exists.