

# COLORFUL SCRIPTURE

September 8, 2024

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## Listen for God's Gifts Around Us

Based on: Is 35:4-7a; Jas 2:1-5; Mk 7:31-37

By Marianne Couture

Sounds everywhere: people talking, children giggling, clocks ticking, phones ringing, teakettles whistling, music playing, TVs blaring, traffic moving! How different our lives would be if we couldn't hear them.

Throughout Scripture, God commands that the poor - all those in need - be given special loving care. In this Sunday's Gospel, some people came to Jesus with a deaf man who could not speak very well and asked for Jesus' help. Feeling sorry for the man, Jesus took him aside from the crowd to a quiet place. Touching the man's ears and tongue, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Ephphatha" - that is, "Be opened!" Immediately, the man could hear and speak clearly! He could hear Jesus and everything around him. How different his life would be now. Most likely, he thanked Jesus and became one of his followers.

At baptism, the church welcomed us as new members of the Catholic faith community and our lives were joined to Jesus. He gave us new life, the life of the Holy Spirit.

The priest asked some questions, and our parents and godparents answered for us. He asked them what they believed as Catholics. They promised to help us grow as followers of Jesus.

At our baptism, the priest prayed a special blessing, the "Ephphatha," (pronounced EF-fah-thah) or prayer over the ears and the mouth. The priest said, "The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb 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. Amen."

We hear Jesus speak to us at Mass, especially during the readings, the Gospel, and the homily. We respond with prayers and songs and by going out and doing what Jesus asks of us - loving God and neighbor, especially those in need.

Take time each day to really listen to the loving words of your parents, grandparents, and other family members. Take time also during the remaining summer days to really listen to the sounds of nature: birds chirping, bees buzzing, squirrels scampering about, rain falling, wind whispering through the trees, lake water rippling. These are all God's gifts to us because he loves us.

Thank Jesus for the gift of hearing!

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