

## Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time



the ears of the deaf be cleared;  
then will the lame leap like a stag,  
then the tongue of the mute will sing.

Isaiah 35:5-6

SEPTEMBER

5  
2021

## Feast of Faith

### Remembering

When Jesus broke the bread on the night before he died, he told his disciples, “do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19). Christians have been faithful to that solemn command. Our eucharistic remembering is not nostalgia, nor is it merely historical, recalling events and facts of long ago. In the liturgy, remembering is action. “Do this,” Jesus said. In the Eucharist, we remember by doing. And as we remember, the sacrifice of Jesus is renewed, truly made present, no longer then, but now.

After the consecration, each of the Eucharistic Prayers includes a section called the anamnesis, a Greek word that means “remembering.” In this part of the prayer, “the Church, fulfilling the command that she received from Christ the Lord through the Apostles, keeps the memorial of Christ, recalling especially his blessed Passion, glorious Resurrection, and Ascension into heaven” (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 79e). We pause and call to mind the whole paschal mystery, Christ’s dying and rising. “We celebrate the memory of his death and resurrection” (Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation II). Obeying Christ’s command, we remember.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

## The Messiah Foretold

Today’s story of the cure of a deaf man with a speech impediment is a good example of how much is contained in a simple miracle story. The Greek word *mogilalos* appears only here in all of the New Testament. It is a technical term referring to someone with a stammer. It is also used only once in the entire Jewish scriptures, in the passage that we read today as our first reading from Isaiah. Clearly, by his choice of this precise word Mark wants us to recognize that what Jesus is doing is the fulfillment of what Isaiah had predicted centuries earlier. In fact, Mark wants us to recognize that Jesus is the Messiah foretold by Isaiah and the other Jewish prophets of old.

The word *ephphatha*, “be opened,” used to describe the restoration of the man’s speech, is another example of a subtle allusion to an earlier prophecy. This time the prophecy in question is from Ezekiel, when he foretells that in the messianic age, “your mouth shall be opened to speak” (24:26). The sophistication of Mark’s narrative is further revealed when we realize that there are multiple levels within a single reference. Mark not only draws our attention back to Israel’s prophetic past, he also points to the initiatory practice of his contemporaries by his mention of such things as spittle, touching of ears, and the use of the word *ephphatha*, all of which were practices incorporated into the early Church’s baptismal ritual.

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## Readings for the Week

|                   |                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Monday:</b>    | Col 1:24 — 2:3; Ps 62:6-7, 9; Lk 6:6-11, or, for Labor Day, any readings from the Mass “For the Blessing of Human Labor,” nos. 907-911 |
| <b>Tuesday:</b>   | Col 2:6-15; Ps 145:1b-2, 8-11; Lk 6:12-19                                                                                              |
| <b>Wednesday:</b> | Mi 5:1-4a or Rom 8:28-30; Ps 13:6 Mt 1:1-16, 18-23 [18-23]                                                                             |
| <b>Thursday:</b>  | Col 3:12-17; Ps 150:1b-6; Lk 6:27-38                                                                                                   |
| <b>Friday:</b>    | 1 Tm 1:1-2, 12-14; Ps 16:1b-2a, 5, 7-8, 11; Lk 6:39-42                                                                                 |
| <b>Saturday:</b>  | 1 Tm 1:15-17; Ps 113:1b-7; Lk 6:43-49                                                                                                  |
| <b>Sunday:</b>    | Is 50:5-9a; Ps 116:1-6, 8-9; Jas 2:14-18; Mk 8:27-35                                                                                   |

## Saints and Special Observances

|                   |                                                                  |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sunday:</b>    | Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time                             |
| <b>Monday:</b>    | Labor Day; Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year 5782) begins at sunset |
| <b>Wednesday:</b> | The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary                          |
| <b>Thursday:</b>  | St. Peter Claver                                                 |
| <b>Saturday:</b>  | Patriot Day; Blessed Virgin Mary                                 |



## Today’s Readings

**First Reading** — Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God (Isaiah 35:4-7a).

**Psalms** — Praise the Lord, my soul! (Psalm 146).

**Second Reading** — Show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ (James 2:1-5).

**Gospel** — Jesus makes the deaf hear and the mute speak (Mark 7:31-37).

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**Twenty-third Sunday  
In Ordinary Time  
September 5, 2021**

**Did not God choose those who are poor in  
the world to be rich in faith and heirs to the  
kingdom?**

**—James 2:5**

### *Treasures From Our Tradition*

Turning the calendar page to September marks a new beginning in the lives of many who live by the academic year. Traditionally the start of the school year in the United States, this month can bring to mind the many calendars by which we live. There are fiscal years, academic years, television seasons, sports seasons—the list seems endless. Added to all of these is, of course, the liturgical year.

A Christian of the first century or so would have been hard-pressed to understand what we mean by a feast day or holy day. That person would have understood Sunday as the primary feast day, and Easter as the primary Sunday. It was only over time that the Church began to set aside particular days and seasons to commemorate certain events or highlight selected mysteries of the faith. What has evolved over the centuries is a “map” of our faith, written on the days and seasons of the year. Some have observed that one will absorb all the major teachings of the Church in the course of a single year of Sundays if one is attentive. What a wonderful way to get Christianity “into our bones!” And best of all, there are no grades!

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

### *Royal Treatment*

St. James is exaggerating a little when he describes how people might greet visitors or new members in the church. Hopefully, no one was that obvious at treating wealthy members better than poor ones. Sadly, prejudice is a sin that is just as prevalent today as it was 2000 years ago. Today we have laws for business and government to prevent prejudice. But the subtler forms of judging people by their race, clothing, speech, religion, etc. sometimes hide behind patriotism, faith, or the desire to protect our families. So how can we stop it?

One reason for prejudice is ignorance. Some people will believe anything they hear or read, especially if they see it on the internet. When you get an e-mail that says “true Americans” are white, English-speaking Christians, there is probably some prejudice behind it. The only way to fight ignorance is with the truth. Jesus himself said the truth will set you free. (Jn 8:32) He ignored the laws/traditions that said you cannot associate with unclean people, Gentiles, or sinners. He told us that God loves all people, even sinners, so what right do we have to judge someone just because they are different?

A second reason for prejudice is fear. We are told that certain neighborhoods are dangerous. Or an older adult sees three teenage boys walking down the street and because of her fear, she thinks they could be gang members. Sometimes fear stops us from helping the needy. But remember how many times Jesus tells us in the gospels, “Do not be afraid.”

If we can learn to see Christ in all peoples, regardless of their race or lifestyle, we are beginning to leave prejudice behind. If we teach our children to respect the poor, the disabled, the homeless, we can help them to understand what James meant about God choosing the “poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom.” (Jas 2:5)

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