

Homily. 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.B. 4/5 September 2021.

How we see something or someone predicated what we'll have to say about them. If our vision is skewed, unreal or incomplete then this means that when we speak about what we've seen our words will suffer from the same lack. This fact applies to every situation, person and relationship.

In the 1st reading Isaiah told us of the coming of God who would clear our blind eyes so that we could see as God sees. He announced that our ears, too, would hear properly and our tongues speak freely with the truth of God's insight and glory. This is a good-news message for all of us to absorb. At last, seeing, hearing and speaking the truth as it is, we will dance for joy like the deer and sing out our joy.

Connecting Isaiah's prophecy to the gospel, we heard the story of a man with multiple hearing and speech impediments. In many physical and social ways he was cut off from and cut out of normal everyday discourse with others. Thankfully, he had some people who cared for him enough to bring him to Jesus. They'd turned to Jesus because they knew of what He'd done to help others in need.

St. Mark says that Jesus took the man aside in private, looked up to heaven and sighed as He sought to heal him. His sigh expressed the challenge of this healing and His awareness that by making this man opened He was advancing the day of God's coming and all that this would mean for His own life and death.

In ordering people who witnessed this cure not to tell others about it, Jesus was pleading for them not to place His own life in peril from the

jealousy of the authorities. Ever clear sighted, Jesus saw that His acts would end up being misinterpreted by the powerful who would seek to silence Him. Deeper down, I believe that Jesus knew that His plea would be in vain, for the opening up of the man foreshadowed the opening up of all who came to know about what had happened as they admiringly told the story far and wide.

Friends, you and I are God's people, Christ-like people in God's family, called every day to tell forth the message of courage and hope. God is opening up our eyes so that we can see things and others as clearly as God sees, unsealing our ears to hear the what the truth really is and loosening our tongues to proclaim the works and wonders of God with us. In this mission we are like the impeded man and the gathered crowd in the gospel, letting the Lord open us up to what is right and true.

Then, having seen, heard and experienced God's work for us, we begin publishing in our own words and practicing by our own deeds the good-news of God's love. Since we know that God always acts for our good and for that of the world, we're able to do this free from the bias, misjudgements and blind prejudice so strongly condemned by St. James in the 2nd reading. In these challenging days then, ours has to be the message and touch that opens up, never closes, that heals and frees, never imprisons, reduces or shuts off others from the generous kindness of the Lord to all.