

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – B

It's Hope Sunday

- Today's Readings I think are readings of Hope.
 - In first reading Israel is in exile – for an entire generation!
 - They've lost hope, desperate, they're in despair – its hopeless.
 - All of us, in some way or another – at some time in life, sadness, & DESPAIR - this is the people Isaiah is talking about
 - Isaiah brings a message of hope from God
 - “say to those who are frightened, be strong, fear not”
 - How many times does it say FEAR NOT in the bible? 365x OT&NT
 - God is trying to tell us something – every day – fear not – 356x
- ***But there's more in Isaiah -***
 - “Here is your God. He comes with vindication. With divine recompense he comes to save you.” WHO COMES TO SAVE YOU? God – Messianic sign
 - “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be cleared. The lame will leap like a stag and the mute will sing”
 - Sing? We are in exile!*** But the messiah's coming – mute won't just speak SING
- Now fast forward 500 years to the Gospel:
 - Jesus travels to Decapolis (PAGAN COUNTRY) Huge – 10 cities grew into 1
 - Pagans bring Him a deaf man with a speech impediment
 - He puts His fingers in the man's ears, and spitting, touched his tongue.
 - Jesus actually enters into the man – fingers in ears, touches his tongue
 - Did you know this has been done to you? At Baptism*
 - “That your ears may be opened to hear the Word of God**
 - And our mouth might be loosened to proclaim it”**

JESUS FULFILLS ISAIAH'S PROPHECY

“Ears of the deaf will be cleared – mute will sing”

- NB - Jesus took the man aside – treated him with dignity
He had a special need, a special problem
Jesus acted out of love – not power – and changed despair to hope
Jesus takes the man away from the crowd's prying eyes for a personal encounter
Have you ever had a personal encounter with Jesus?
- Can you really hear the Word of God – or are you a bit deaf?
 - Can you really proclaim the Word of God – or are you a bit mute?
 - “His tongue was released and he spoke plainly”
 - God needs our voice speaking plainly that His voice may be heard

What's this mean for us:

- We must not only BRING HOPE, we have to be people who HAVE HOPE
 - You can't bring it if you don't have it!
 - Hope comes from Jesus, and having an intimate relationship with Him. INTIMATE
 - How much more intimate can you be than to share spit with Christ? LOVER
 - He takes that which is within Him and gives it to us – & we are healed.
- They proclaim “He does all things well, He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak”
- Jesus orders them to tell no one – THEM – the crowd – yet they tell all they meet
- Jesus has done many wonderful things for you and for me – ***but he didn't tell us not to tell.***
- In fact – He says go and tell everyone the Good News – HAVE YOU TOLD ANYONE?
- When we enter into relationship with Christ, Jesus brings us hope and healing.
 - Regardless of where you've been, what you've done, we have been saved by Jesus

- You gotta tell somebody You gotta tell somebody