Readings for the week of September 8, 2024

Sunday:
Is 35:4-7a/Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10 (1B)/
Jas 2:1-5/Mk 7:31-37

Monday:
1 Cor 5:1-8/Ps 5:5-6, 7, 12/Lk 6:6-11

Tuesday:
1 Cor 6:1-11/Ps 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b/Lk 6:12-19

Wednesday:
1 Cor 7:25-31/Ps 45:11-12, 14-15, 16-17/
Lk 6:20-26

Thursday:
1 Cor 8:1b-7, 11-13/Ps 139:1b-3, 13-14ab, 23-24/Lk 6:27-38

Friday:
1 Cor 9:16-19, 22b-27/Ps 84:3, 4, 5-6, 12/
Lk 6:39-42

Saturday:
Nm 21:4b-9/Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38/Phil 2:6-11/Jn 3:13-17

Next Sunday:
Is 50:4c-9a/Ps 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 (9)/
Jas 2:14-18/Mk 8:27-35

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Gospel Meditation

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

One of the most touching YouTube videos I've ever seen is one in which a deaf woman receives new technology to heal her hearing. She hears her husband's voice for the first time — and her own, too — and bursts into tears of overwhelming joy. It must have been like an immovable wall between her and her loved ones came tumbling down.

We are all like this woman, to some degree. We believe in the presence of God's love, but we can't hear Him. We can't speak well about Him. The deaf man who can't speak properly in the Gospel today is an image of what God wants us to experience again and again. Jesus takes the man aside to a private place away from the crowd, touches his ears and tongue, and says, "**Ephphata!**" The man's ears are opened, and he speaks clearly. Contact with Christ has this effect on us.

This experience happens to us in our baptism, almost exactly. It happens to us in the liturgy. It happens in our private prayer. It happens when we hear the voice of God in our conscience. The more we engage these privileged channels of Jesus' healing, the more we are empowered to hear and speak of the presence of God's perfect love.

— Father John Muir

(PRACTICING)
CATHOLIC

Be Opened

There are several moments throughout the calendar year when we are tricked into thinking we can reinvent ourselves.

One of them is New Year's Day. The barista at my coffee shop told me that they sell more decaf coffee in January than in the entirety of the remaining year, because everyone is swearing off caffeine. By February, she said, the trend subsides: folks have realized they're not actually superheroes just because the last digit of the year has increased by one.

The beginning of a new school year is another of those moments. Every pencil is freshly sharpened, and every lesson plan is painstakingly plotted. Our heads are full of what we plan to do this year, how we plan to do it, who we plan to become.

But by May, the wind is out of our sails. We've learned the concepts, we've used up the pencils, yes — but we've remembered that underneath it all we're basically the same people, with the same shortcomings and the same obstacles as we always were. The only difference in September was we had new planners.

The truth is that we cannot reinvent ourselves. We can't change ourselves at all, not on New Year's Day or the first day of school or on our 40th birthday or after quitting a bad habit. We are what we are: blind in some ways, deaf in others, crippled in still more, moving through life with uncertainty, stumbling in the dark.

People don't change. Not without miracles.

But being a Christian means believing in miracles and being ready for them at any moment — in January or in September, in the middle of a hopeless week or at the end of a bad day, when you feel strong and when you don't, when you want to be better and when you feel too tired to try.

No, we can't change ourselves, but we can be changed. There is one who can change us if we will let him. He is waiting — now, tomorrow, yesterday, next week. The time is always right for a miracle.

"He put his finger into the man's ears ... and said to him, 'Ephphatha!'— that is, 'Be opened!' —And immediately the man's ears were opened ..." Mark 7:34-35

- Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Why do we do that?
Catholic Life Explained

Question:

What is the history behind feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross?

Answer:

Emperor Constantine's mother, Helena, is credited with having discovered the true cross around 330. She traveled to the Holy Land and uncovered the places associated with Jesus' life. Legend has it that Helena uncovered three crosses but was not able to detect the true cross until each of them was laid on a leper. Only one of them cured the leper, proving it to be the true cross. A great church was built at the site, and soon various portions of the cross were sent to other churches as relics to be venerated.

The day after the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, September 14, 335, the actual cross was displayed for veneration. Egeria, a women traveler to Jerusalem around the year 386, kept a diary that has survived. She tells of the unique veneration of the wood of the cross that took place on Good Friday, something maintained ritually to this very day.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross focuses on the gift of love that Jesus manifested by his total gift of self, offered for all. The cross, the ultimate form of capital punishment in its day, has become for us the ultimate symbol of love and triumph over evil and death.

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Weekly Prayer

Sunday's Readings

First Reading:

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened,
the ears of the deaf be cleared;
then will the lame leap like a stag,
then the tongue of the mute will sing. (Is 35:5-6)

Psalm:

Praise the Lord, my soul! (Ps 146)

Second Reading:

Did not God choose those who are poor in the world
to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom
that he promised to those who love him? (Jas 2:5)

Gospel:

"He has done all things well.
He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mk 7:37)

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Live The Liturgy
Inspiration of the Week

"Be opened!" said Christ two thousand years ago, as he placed his finger in the ear of the deaf man. "Be opened!" he says to us today, laying his hand upon our hearts. May we always accept Christ's invitation to become a new creation.

Observances for the week of September 8, 2024

Sunday:	23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Grandparent's Day
Monday:	St. Peter Claver, Priest
Wednesday:	Patriot Day
Thursday:	The Most Holy Name of Mary
Friday:	St. John Chrysostom, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
Saturday:	The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Next Sunday:	24th Sunday in Ordinary Time; Catechetical Sunday

Saint of the week

St. Caterina Volpicelli (1839-1894) left a life of elegant Neapolitan society to serve the Lord. She adhered to the Apostleship of Prayer, dedicating each day to the Sacred Heart. Her order, the Servants of the Sacred Heart, opened an orphanage, a lending library, and nursed cholera victims.

Prayer for Grandparents

Dear God,
What a grace to live in a world of all ages and stages.
Bless our grandparents, today and always.
Thank You for their experiences, wisdom, and insight.
Thank You for the gifts they bring the Church.
Thank You for the lessons they teach the next generations
Amen.

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man." For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. - Jn 3:13, 17

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Questions of the Week

Invite Parishioners to Reflect and Respond to Scripture

First Reading:

The prophet Isaiah encouraged the Israelites to be strong in their conviction that God was coming to heal them and renew creation itself. Who could you encourage to be firm in their faith this week?

Second Reading:

James taught believers to make no distinctions between the rich and the poor in their community gatherings. How do you think showing no partiality helps a community grow in faith?

Gospel:

We hear today how the people of the Decapolis were astonished at Jesus's healing of the deaf and mute. What parts of your life need healing?

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Liturgical Life

"And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. - Jn 3:14-16

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