



Our Lady of Peace Church

Sunday, September 5, 2021

**FROM THE DESK OF FR. STAN**

My dear friends,

## The Kingdom of God comes in power

Our first reading for this Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Isaiah 35:4-7, offers both consolation and hope. Down through the course of the centuries the people of Israel have had many enemies, but they trusted in God's providence. Even during times of suffering and defeat, they could look forward to better days. And so the prophet begins, "Thus says the Lord: Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you."

The promises God makes go beyond simply reversing political fortunes. Isaiah looks forward to the day when misery will be healed, and even nature itself will be transformed back to God's original creation of the Garden of Eden. "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. Streams will burst forth in the desert, and rivers in the steppe. The burning sands will become pools, and the thirsty ground, springs of water." Such promises came to be associated with the coming of the Messiah, God's Chosen One.

The Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 146, has a similar, joyful outlook, celebrating God's faithfulness and enduring love. "The God of Jacob keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets captives free. The Lord gives sight to the blind; the Lord raises up those who were bowed down. The Lord loves the just; the Lord protects strangers. The fatherless and the widow the Lord sustains, but the way of the wicked he thwarts. The Lord shall reign forever; your God, O Zion, through all generations."

The first reading and the gospel are intentionally linked, so that we might understand how God's promises came to be fulfilled in a dramatic way during the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Mark 7:31-37 begins with the establishment of the setting. "Again Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis." Mark wants to make sure that his readers understand that what he reports is solid, concrete and factual. Next, the focus of the passage is set up. "And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him." Thus, Jesus is already known as a powerful miracle worker.

But then we find an unusual twist that is quite common in Mark. We are told that Jesus "took him off by himself away from the crowd." Jesus always finds ways of downplaying the spectacular and instead celebrating the faith that makes the healing possible. The healing is then described. "He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, 'Ephphatha!'—that is, 'Be opened!'—and immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly." The various details of the healing add to its dramatic, and very real, nature.

Jesus then orders the man not to tell anyone, which is very strange in that Jesus is an evangelizer who seeks to make his teaching known. Healings such as this naturally attract a crowd. And that in fact happens. "But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, 'He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.'"

Scholars refer to Jesus' desire not to let the extraordinary to get out of hand the "Messianic Secret". The healing Jesus performs is a display of power. But as we continue reading the gospel, we learn that Jesus is not a Messiah or Lord in the way that the jubilant crowds expect. He clearly teaches that he is not like earthly rulers. He has come, not to be served, but to serve. And he expects his followers to do the same. Certainly, the clearest evidence of who Jesus is can be seen in one of the central images of our faith: the crucifix. There, we see the Lord laying his life down, the total gift, on behalf of his friends and followers.

So, why the healings? Why the miracles? First, they reveal the compassion of Jesus, who is often described as full of pity for both individuals and vast crowds. Second, they help to establish Jesus' "credentials" as one who has the power to heal, and who, therefore, should be listened to as he proclaims the kingdom of God, the good news that needs to be carried to the ends of the earth. And third, Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of God's promises and Messianic expectations, such as we find in today's first reading. Jesus is the long-awaited one who restores humanity and all of creation to its fullness as God intended from all eternity. We are created in the image and likeness of God, and it is only in God that our deepest longings can be fulfilled.



**Saturday, September 4**-Rosary at 3:15P

4:00P *Michael Cenzano*  
by Ann & the girls

**Sunday, September 5**

8:00A *Health & blessings for Mary Jane Garbiel*  
by a friend

10:00A *Our Lady of Peace Women's Group*

**Saturday, September 11**-Rosary at 3:15P

4:00P *Stanley & Lorraine Wasileski*  
by Ed & Dottie Pelis

**Sunday, September 12**

8:00A *Raymond & Rose Zukowski*  
by their family

10:00A *In honor of Eileen Mariani on her birthday*  
by her family

**DAILY MASS**

**Monday, September 6**

8:00A *Dean Letourneau*  
by John Caloon

**Tuesday, September 7**

8:00A *James Kiley family*

**Wednesday, September 8**

8:00A *Carolyn Prunier*  
by Paul

**Thursday, September 9**

8:00A *Elaine Gavin*  
by Sue Hastings

**Friday, September 10**

8:00A *Holy Communion Service*

**Our Lady's Window**

**September 5**

*Jimmy Brodie*

by the Senior Choir

**September 8**

*George & Alice Riendeau*

by their children



Please remember in your prayers  
+Sean Connelly

**RECTORY CLOSED** on Monday **September 6** in observance of the Labor Day holiday.



**Support Montague Catholic Social Ministries**  
Our parish donations of non-perishable food and goods will now be given to stock the food pantry at MCSM and help the many families in need in our community.

Get your  
**FLU**  **SHOT**  
not the flu.

**CALL TO REGISTER NOW!** In cooperation with Walgreens we will be sponsoring a free flu clinic on **October 6** from 9:00-11:30A in our parking lot. Call Marguerite 863.2585 ext. 103 to register in advance.



Inquiry sessions will be Sunday, **September 12** at 9:00A and Monday, **September 13** at 6:30P in the church. There is no pressure or commitment. If you wish more information, call Marguerite 863.2585 ext. 103



**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Classes will begin on Sunday, **October 3** at 9:00A. **September 19** is Catechetical Sunday. That day 4 students will receive their First Communion as they could not do so last year. If parents have any questions, call Carol at 863.4015.

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