



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 8, 2024

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

Greetings of peace, love, and joy!

“Ephphatha!”

Our Gospel Reading, this Twenty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time, is about Jesus performing a miracle to a deaf man with a speech impediment. The man is brought by concerned people and asks Jesus to lay His hand on him. Jesus speaks “Ephphatha,” an Aramaic word that means “Be opened.” Jesus heals the person. The people are astonished and recognize Jesus’ extraordinary acts, like making the deaf hear and the mute speak. The miracle that Jesus performed is the fulfillment of the Prophecy of Isaiah in the 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.”

God, the source of life and goodness, wants all people to be whole. Jesus, the Beloved Son of Father, fulfills that with His healing power and might. He heals and restores life and dignity to those who are sick, poor, and oppressed and sets free those imprisoned by sin. Whenever Jesus performs to heal the sick or performs a great miracle on the people, He not only takes out the illness but brings the person to their total self. He makes the person whole physically, mentally, and spiritually with dignity and honor as a child of God.

Being deaf is difficult. Besides being deaf, the person also experiences speech difficulty. It affects the whole person, his way of life, and his relationship. He is enslaved in a situation and is limited to performing the daily chores of life. Such is the case for a person with physical deafness but more for a spiritually impaired person with hearing. Our sense of hearing and speech may be okay, but do we listen to what we are supposed to? Do we speak what we are supposed to say?

This Sunday is one such moment given to all of us to reflect on our response to Jesus’ call to discipleship. To be a disciple is not just to fulfill our Sunday obligations, which are great, to do works of charity, but to live also the call to faithfulness in all our ways. Often, we listen to ourselves and do not hear what we need to hear, understand, and speak the words we need to say, not how a true disciple will speak.

To guide us through a more profound commitment as Jesus’ followers, we need to go back and read Sacred Scripture and use the Word of God as a source of life and goodness. In doing so, we can share words of wisdom with others and practice what He teaches us through our ways. Let the words of Jesus “Ephphatha” be for us to be faithful to our calling and live our lives so that we can exemplify what a faithful Christian is, one who hears the Word speaks, and lives the Word daily.

Your friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual