



AMDG  
23RD SUNDAY IN  
ORDINARY TIME  
9TH SEPTEMBER 2018



**Be opened!**

OPENING PRAYER

O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption,  
look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters,  
that those who believe in Christ  
may receive true freedom  
and an everlasting inheritance.

Today's readings have some of the messianic joy that Jesus brings to all people, especially the poor.

The *First Reading*, from the prophet Isaiah, is full of hope and joy. He looks forward to deliverance from exile; people will be healed, creation revived with gushing water.

In response, *Psalms 145 (146)* is a prayer of praise to the God who feeds the hungry, heals the sick, and cares for the poor and downtrodden.

St James, in the *Second Reading*, clearly states that God chooses the poor, and that we too must not favour the rich and powerful at their expense. We are all equal in God's sight and must act accordingly. We are all heirs to his kingdom.

The *Gospel* recounts the healing of the deaf man with an impediment in his speech. His healing is not just physical; the whole person is opened to the Lord.

Let us try to spread some of the joy of Jesus around us this week. Perhaps in this way we can become more aware of any hidden prejudices we may hold in our relationships to others.

## PSALM 145 (146)

*R. / My soul give praise to the Lord.*

**I**t is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,  
who is just to those who are oppressed.  
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,  
the Lord, who sets prisoners free.

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,  
who raises up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord, who loves the just,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger.

The Lord upholds the widow and orphan,  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.  
The Lord will reign for ever,  
Zion's God, from age to age. Alleluia!

I come to my place of prayer, and I may begin by reflecting on my mood today.  
Perhaps I need to ask for the grace to enter into the spirit of this psalm –  
a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

I read the psalm, taking time for a breath or two between each phrase.

How do I feel now?

Maybe I can thank God for the times I have endured some hardship or anxiety,  
and he has 'kept faith', raised me up ...

Or for the times he has helped me 'see', or has satisfied my inner hunger ...

I open wide my vision to intercede for dear ones who are suffering, or for  
people in anguished parts of the world.

Perhaps I can place them all in God's hands in a spirit of faith and trust.

When I am ready, I end my prayer in gratitude and trust.

## GOSPEL MARK 7: 31–37

**R**eturning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done all things well,' they said, 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

As I begin my prayer, I take the time to become aware of God's all-enveloping presence. I try to relax into this, resting in his loving gaze.

When I am ready, I read the text slowly a couple of times.

I may try and imagine the scene ... Jesus is walking with his disciples, making his way back to Galilee, when strangers bring him a deaf man with a speech impediment.

Perhaps I notice Jesus's humanity. He gives the man privacy and all his attention. Do I sense this?

This miracle is accompanied by physical contact and involvement. How does that affect me?

As I contemplate the scene, I may consider in what ways I am deaf or silent.

Can I hear Jesus's words, 'Be opened' as addressed to me?

How does that make me feel?

I reflect on the areas in myself and in my own life where I would like to be more open to the Lord.

I speak to him about this, and maybe offer these areas to his loving action.

Before I end my prayer, I give God praise for 'doing all things well'.

I finish with a 'Glory be to the Father ...'

## Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Say to all faint hearts, 'Courage! Do not be afraid.' *First Reading*

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever. *Psalm*

It was to those who are poor that God chose,  
to be rich in faith and to be heirs to the kingdom. *Second Reading*

He has done all things well.  
He makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak. *Gospel*

*This week's texts if you want to reflect further:  
Isaiah 35: 4-7; Psalm 145 (146); James 2: 1-5; Mark 7: 31-37*



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH  
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JESUIT  
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