

Lord, heal me...



I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Is 35:4-7)

⁴Say to the fearful of heart:

The words of encouragement

Be strong, do **not fear!**/ Here is your God,/he comes with vindication;/ With divine recompense/ he comes to save you.^d

Effects of God's coming

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall see,/ and the ears of the deaf be opened^e;/ ⁶Then the lame shall leap like a stag,/ and the mute tongue sing for joy!// For waters will burst forth in the wilderness,/and streams in the Arabah./ ⁷The burning sands will become pools,/ and the thirsty ground, springs of water;/ The abode where jackals crouch/ will be a marsh for the reed and papyrus.

THE FOCUS: Taking Courage

COMMENTARY

- Our text belongs to the Proto (First) Isaiah (1 Is 1-39).
- The text is addressed to “those whose hearts are frightened” (v. 4).
- Our text is divided into two sections: encouraging words (coming of God), (v.4b); effects (vv. 5-7).
- Style: parallelism in v. 4b.

- Observe the effects: vv. 5-6a pertain to the human body; vv. 6b-7 pertain to nature.
- Humans cannot make these things possible.
- Only the power, the coming of God makes them possible.

REFLECTIONS

The First Reading is addressed to those who are experiencing fear. Fear is a terrible thing. It paralyzes us from doing what is good. We, who are fearful, must believe in the assurance of the prophet (*proto-Isaiah, the prophet of Jerusalem in the mid 700s BCE*).

His assurance is that God is coming. Fear must cease when we believe God is coming.

When we stop being fearful because we believe that God has come to our side, then the impossible becomes possible.

We have to trust in the words of the prophet, which are the words of God. We must overcome our paranoia.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10) PRAISE THE LORD, MY SOUL!

SECOND READING (Jas 2: 1-5)

The command to be impartial

¹*My brothers, **show no partiality** as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

Situation of partiality

²For if a man with gold rings on his fingers and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes in, ³and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “Sit here, please,” while you say to the poor one, “Stand

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there,” or “Sit at my feet,”⁴ have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?*

Reason for showing no impartiality

^{5a}Listen, my beloved brothers. 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?

THE FOCUS: Showing no Partiality

COMMENTARY

- The Letter of James is one of the Catholic Letters (meaning, addressed to no particular group, unlike the Letter to the Corinthians, Ephesians, etc).
- The author addresses himself to the brothers (and sisters) during celebrations.
- To show partiality is to discriminate against, to make distinctions, to show favor to the rich, to lower further down those who are already low for the sake of the rich.
- In the Christian assemblies, there was a tendency that the rich ones were given special treatment; the poor were shabbily treated.
- The letter defends the rights of the poor in the Christian gatherings and assemblies.
- The letter reminds the assembly that the poor are chosen by God to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom.
- What does it mean to be rich in faith? What does it mean to be heirs in the kingdom?

REFLECTIONS

In our gatherings, we must take care not to discriminate against the poor, especially when there is scarcity of space.

We should not take for granted the destiny of the poor: to be rich in faith and heirs in the kingdom. We learn from the poor (not from the rich) what is meant to be rich in faith and heirs in the kingdom.

We should not give the rich special treatment at the expense of the poor (their dignity and honor). Important in the eyes of God is

the one who shows love to God, not those who are in power and wear jewelries and expensive clothings, nice tattoos, and accessories.

GOSPEL READING (Mk 7:31-37)

Setting

^{31j}Again he left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. ³²And people brought to him a **deaf man** who had a **speech impediment** and begged him to lay his hand on him.

The gestures of Jesus

³³He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; ³⁴then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, “*Ephphatha!*” (that is, “Be opened!”)

The result (the healing)

³⁵And [immediately] the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly.

The command not to tell to anyone

^{36*}He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. ^{37k}They were exceedingly astonished and they said, “He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and [the] mute speak.”

THE FOCUS: The Healing of the Deaf Mute.

COMMENTARY

- Tyre and Sidon are familiar places these times due to the recent war in Lebanon.
- The Sea of Galilee is also familiar, but not Decapolis. (Consult the map of NT).
- The people who brought the deaf-mute must have come from Decapolis (10 cities).
- Jesus heals the deaf-mute upon the request of the people.
- Jesus' actions for the healing:
 - To put finger into ears

- Spit, touch tongue
- Looked up to heaven, groaned
- Said “Ephphatha”
- The miracle:
 - Ears opened
 - Tongue loosened
 - He spoke plainly
- The people were told to keep it to themselves but all the more they “proclaimed.”
- Note the words: They “proclaimed it.” It is more than reporting.
- What makes them “proclaim” is their feeling of awe and amazement.

REFLECTIONS

Healing comes as a result of the following:

- Faith of people who bring the sick and the power of Jesus.

We need healing. In some ways, we are also deaf-mute. Many times, we cannot hear and speak very well. That’s why we fail to appreciate and give compliments to God and to others.

We cannot be healed unless we allow ourselves to be brought to Jesus.

On proclamation:

Proclamation comes as a result of witnessing something great.

Silence is irrelevant when you have just experienced something great. It is but natural to “proclaim” it.

When we continue reading the Gospel, we will find out that those whose ears and mouths are healed, are the ones who proclaim that “Jesus is the Christ.”

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

The Three Readings have different focuses: The First Reading is focused on not fearing.

The Second Reading is focused on impartiality. The Gospel Reading is focused on healing.

How do we put them together in one focus?

Maybe, we can **focus on healing**, because there is healing in the First Reading, after fearing. In the Second Reading, there is healing in the community if everybody is treated equally, there is no impartiality.

How to develop your homily

Begin by relating your experience on being sick, when you were hospitalized, etc. (*You cannot talk, see, walk, etc.*)

Dialogue your experiences with the message of the Readings:

Fear not, God is coming to intervene (heal). He will reverse the fate of the deprived (First Reading).

Be impartial... do not be the cause of deprivation (sickness) of the poor (Second Reading).

Allow yourself to be healed. Let other people carry you to God. He will heal you from your deprivation to hear and speak.

Make people realize how they have been deaf and mute: e.g. not able to appreciate what their parents, children and teachers, priests, etc. are doing; they are always criticizing.

Not having time for bible studies and ongoing formation, etc. Tell the congregation that many of the members are sick. The Church is sick, needs healing.

Challenge: We must heal one another. We must facilitate the healing of one another, by drawing near to Jesus. We must not withhold help (justice and peace) to those who are in need. Jesus in this eucharist welcomes everyone. He does not discriminate against anyone in the eucharist. His words, his body and blood are made available to everyone.

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III. OUR CONTEXT

What are the different healings you have experienced these days? (HM)

