



Open up!



by Choobie Albia

The reality that we face today may be described as a reality full of fears. We fear for our health and the health of our dear ones, we fear death, we fear financial instability, we fear dramatic changes in our communities that may harm us in one way or another, we fear the uncertainties of what tomorrow may bring. Fear can take a toll on one's life and may eventually lead to the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness.

The readings for this Sunday's liturgy invite us to calm and do away with our fears. The scriptures opens us to another reality that we should cling to because it cast away fears – the reality of God. The First reading offers us a surety to place all our trust and hope in

God because God is true to His name "Yahweh" or "I AM" which indicates He is always present – He is in solidarity with us. He knows our fears, and He knows everyone's suffering.

The first reading is supported by the Gospel that narrates how God remains faithful to us as He became one of us, bringing healing, salvation, and peace. In the Gospel, we can learn that Jesus relates to us in times of need and suffering. He takes us by the hand and leads us to salvation just as he did to the deaf man with speech impediments. The way Jesus healed the deaf man in the Gospel is worth noticing for its uniqueness. This brings us the understanding that aside from the power of His words, God

uses other means of healing. This tells us that God can use every one of us also to bring peace to others. Even if we are in fear, even if we feel worthless and helpless, God can use us to serve others, for, through this, God's majesty is made more manifest.

This Sunday, we are invited by Jesus when he exclaimed "Ephphatha!" to open ourselves to God. And as we open ourselves to God, we also open ourselves to others serving one another in charity and faith so that fear may be dispelled and that the reign of God be made manifest here on earth. We are all then called to make a response to Jesus' call for openness by responding just as the Psalm reads: "Praise the Lord, my soul!"

PASTORAL CATECHESIS FOR THE YEAR OF *MISSIO AD GENTES*

Missionary Visit of Pope Paul VI

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

Philippine history was made richer with the unprecedented visit of Pope Paul VI on November 27-29, 1970 as part of his lengthy Asian journey. This event became the first of four papal visits: Paul VI (1970); John Paul II (1981 and 1995), and Francis (2015). Each of these visits highlighted various themes of the Catholic faith, especially the Church's commitment to missionary evangelization.

Upon his arrival, Paul VI noted: "Here we are in the Philippines, in this great land so dear to our heart. We greet

it with great joy, in the name of the Lord, who sends us just as He sent Peter and the apostles across the world.... We express our affectionate greeting, and our great joy at having been given the grace to come to you and our deep desire to proclaim our attachment to your people who, in the course of history, have given proof in such a wonderful way of the depth of their faith."

The pope continued: "We come here in obedience to our spiritual mission.... We wish to seek together, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, how best to proclaim the Gospel.... We are seeking to make an eternal and universal message an answer to the questions asked by the man of today. The Gospel is, for all men, the message of salvation!"

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 119 [118]:137, 124)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

You are just, O Lord, and your judgment is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—God’s saving act pertains to the restoration of the whole person, not just to the salvation of the soul. In fact, the future salvation of Israel is described by the prophet Isaiah in terms of the flowering of the dry desert and the healing of a person’s faculties. It is in this spirit that we should look at the healing of the deaf-mute man in the Gospel. Jesus comes to open ears and loosen tongues so that people can praise the heavenly Father and the Son who does all things well.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

(Pause)

All—I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*

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

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All — Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Is 35:4–7a) *(Sit)*

The prophet Isaiah describes Israel’s future return from exile as the marvelous healing of the land and the people. Their restoration is the work of the saving God.

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah

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.

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.

— The word of the Lord.

All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 146)

R—Praise the Lord, my soul!



1. The God of Jacob keeps faith forever,/ secures justice for the oppressed,/ gives food to the hungry./ The LORD sets captives free. **(R)**

2. 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. **(R)**

3. 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. Alleluia. **(R)**

Second Reading (Jas 2:1–5)

James writes that faith in the Lord enables us to see Christ in every person. Therefore, we must give reverence to each one, rich and poor alike.

A reading from the Letter of Saint James

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. For if a man with gold rings and fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes in, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, “Sit

here, please," while you say to the poor one, "Stand there," or "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs?

Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. 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 word of the Lord.
All —Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Cf. Mt 4:23) (*Stand*)

All—Alleluia, alleluia. Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom and cured every disease among the people. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mk 7:31–37)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

AGAIN JESUS left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. 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. He ordered them not to tell anyone. 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."

—The Gospel of the Lord.
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Profession of Faith (*Stand*)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (at the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—We are all in need of God's healing. Let us now turn to our loving Father that he may touch our minds and hearts for us to be whole again. With faith and confidence, let us pray:

R—Lord, our healer, listen to our prayer.

C—May the Pope, bishops, priests and deacons continue to be instrument of the Lord's healing through their administration of the Sacrament of reconciliation. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the Lord work through all medical experts and

frontliners who are fighting COVID 19. May they find strength in those who show them love and compassion. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the leaders of our nation speak out bravely against evil that destroys the dignity of human person and conservation of the world. We pray: **(R)**

C—That the lonely, the migrants, the handicapped, and those who are entangled with pain and separation may experience God's companionship through the care of their communities. We pray: **(R)**

C—May all those who mourn the passing of their loved ones find strength and consolation in the loving embrace of God. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P—Hear our humble petitions, O Lord, as we seek healing and peace. May these prayers help us to care and to listen to each other so that we too can become your instruments of your love and kindness.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts (*Stand*)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—O God, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace, graciously grant that, through this offering, we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty and, by partaking of the sacred mystery, we may be faithfully united in mind and heart.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

Preface III

(Sundays in Ordinary Time)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For we know it belongs to your boundless glory, that you came to the aid of mortal beings with your divinity and even fashioned for us a remedy out of mortality itself, that the cause of our downfall might become the means of our salvation, through Christ our Lord.

Through him the host of Angels adores your majesty and rejoices in your presence for ever. May our voices, we pray, join with theirs in one chorus of exultant praise, as we acclaim:
All—Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under



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my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Jn 8:12)

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Grant that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacrament, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

May the God of all consolation order your days in his peace and grant you the gifts of his blessing.

All—Amen.

P—May he free you always from

every distress and confirm your hearts in his love.

All—Amen.

P—So that on this life's journey you may be effective in good works, rich in the gifts of hope, faith and charity, and may come happily to eternal life.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, +, and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—Our celebration is ended. Go in the peace glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.

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