

# TRINITY NEWS

## The Cure of a Deaf and Speech - Impaired Man

### Mark 7:31-37

Deafness and speech impediment are linked here and in our experience of people who are profoundly deaf, either at birth or shortly thereafter.

The story has Jesus using spittle and touching the areas that were impaired. The use of the Aramaic word "*Ephphatha*" underlines the actual spoken word of Christ in this situation. It suggests that the healing of his deafness will enable him to sort sounds out and apply them to their respective letters. But this would apparently not be enough because the "chain" or "fetter" is taken from his tongue, indicating some residual damage not connected to the distortions of speech caused by deafness.

Jesus was a master of anticipation of what was in front of him as well as being deeply sensitive and wise when he actually got into a situation. We all talk more than we listen and it is one of the deficits of our ways of praying that we talk much more than we listen as we pray to the Mystery of love that we call God.

We are all much more than our present memory. What we call the unconscious, our deepest memory, has trailed behind us since we were children picking up the half-forgotten memories of thoughts and deeds and happenings that seem sometimes to be lost to us. When we are facing some real decision or dealing with a particularly difficult person, then we need to gather around us those in the past who have supported us as well as those who support us in the present moment.

We need to visualise the invisible witnesses from the past and allow their testimony to rise up from our deeper memory and help us in the present. Benjamin Franklin and many others of more recent memory did this in seeking advice in difficult situations. Jesus himself did it when he conversed within a vision with Moses and Elijah on what we call the Mount of Transfiguration. They emerged from the past to share in his glory. But he also needed them because Elijah was a miracle working prophet who was a model for Jesus. Moses had witnessed the glory of God on another mountain and every Jew revered him. When Jesus was teaching, particularly in Matthew's rendition, he seems to have been conscious of the great teacher who had been drawn out the water at birth to be a leader of his people. They talked together about the 'exodus' of Jesus. That is, all that would face him later in Jerusalem.

If you had the choice of 7-10 people sit with you around a table to discuss the deepest matters and decisions that trouble you, who would you choose? If you "see their face no more" they are still eligible because so much advice and guidance from them in the past is still stored in your deep memory. Imagining that you are sitting down to talk with them again may draw so much of what they gave you to the surface again.

**Reflection:** Let us take ten minutes or so to recall our invisible and visible witnesses as we meditate on the gifts of listening and speaking that were denied to the man in the story before Jesus came along with his healing hands. The Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, brings Jesus and his teaching, his words and his deeds, to bear from “the faithful witness” to whom we have talked since we were children. The Spirit, in the distinctive configurations taught by Christ, guides the continuing Jesus Movement in the world and brings to our memories the Christ and also those who are our invisible witnesses to the best insights of our life. What unnerving séances cannot ultimately deliver, the Spirit does by lifting up their presence and guidance to us. Let us listen to Moses and Jesus and all the prophets and those who have been prophetic in our lives, including those who are our guides at the present time.

**Those who walk in the Presence of God cast a shining light, and those who walk in their light are inspired by it.**

**Bishop Arthur Jones**

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## **THIS WEEK:**

### **Wednesday.**

- Bible study, 10:00am.
- Group Discussion, 7:30pm, Parish Office

### **Thursday.**

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel.

## **NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:**

Isaiah 50:4-9; Psalm 116; James 2:1-5,8-10,14-18; Mark 8:27-38 or Mark 9:14-29

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