

Ephphatha- Be opened!

It is always an opportunity to gather to celebrate the Eucharist through which we encounter Jesus in Word and Sacrament. The words from the readings, prayers and songs are meant to invite us to reflect on how they touch and challenge us. Our first reading today, the prophecy of Isaiah, the prophecy of hope came to his people in the face of their fears. These words are very relatable to us because our life will never be devoid of fear and worries. Every day brings new challenges to us that can be depressive and even make us anxious the future. When we remember these words of hope, they help us continue and not to give up because there is hope once there is life.

Isaiah's prophecy of hope and consolation was fulfilled in the person of Christ who came that we all should have life and have it in abundance (John 10: 10). The compassionate and merciful Jesus invites us to come to him with our burdens, fears, doubts, and anxieties so that he will shower his peace in our hearts. Very striking in today's Gospel is this word "Ephphatha-Be opened." If you are familiar with the liturgy of baptism, you will remember that liturgy refers to this passage in praying that the ears and mouth of the newly baptized child would be opened to hear the word of God and speak out the faith in Christ. It is what we all experienced during our baptism. We gather to encounter him so that he keeps opening our ears to hear his words because faith comes through hearing (Romans 10: 15) and for us to continue to be witnesses to our faith in words and deeds. We have to reflect and ask ourselves, do the words we hear bring us hope and courage or despair and fear? Also, do the words that come from our mouth uplift or demoralize, encourage or discourage, build or destroy others?

In addition, the words of the letter of St. James in the second reading invite us to reflect on the way we treat people, especially how we talk to them. What is it that guides us in the way we talk to people? Are we influenced by one's background, status, class, race, or color? God showers his love to all of us, not minding who we are and what we have. He doesn't discriminate at all. It doesn't say because Mr. A or Mrs. A didn't pray enough today, the sun will be scorching in his compound. Let us ask the good Lord that the words we hear can bring us hope and strength and that we become sources of hope and consolation to others by the words that come from us. Amen.

"Let the words of my mouth be acceptable, the thoughts of my heart before you, LORD, my rock and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:15)