



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

Family Faith Focus

Volume 10, Issue 6

September 5, 2021

Dates to Remember

- Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 4: 4:00 PM Mass
September 5: 9:00 AM Mass
- September 5: Labor Day — Mass at 9:00 AM
- September 8: Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- September 9: Memorial of St. Peter Claver

Food for Thought

"Seek God in all things, and we shall find God by our side.

—St. Peter Claver

Saint Peter Claver (1581-1654), was born in Spain. In 1601, he entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Following the completion of his studies in 1616, he was ordained a priest in Cartagena, Columbia, a port city where slaves from Africa arrived to be sold in South America. Peter spent the next 34 years ministering to the slaves, caring for them physically and spiritually. He baptized more than 300,000 slaves until, in 1651, he was sickened by the plague and died a few years later. He is the patron of African missions and of interracial justice. His feast day is September 9.

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 7: 31-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

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. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Celebrating the Birth of our Blessed Mother

On September 8, we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We won't find anything in the Bible about the birth of our Blessed Mother, and we don't know exactly when she was born, but September 8 was designated by the Church as the feast day to celebrate Mary's birthday. It falls exactly nine months after December 8, the day we celebrate Mary's Immaculate Conception. On that day we celebrate our belief, that from the moment of her conception in her mother's womb, Mary was free from the stain of Original Sin.



We also learn from Church Tradition and not Scripture, that the names given to Mary's parents were Joachim and Ann. They were an older couple when God blessed them with the birth of their daughter, Mary. Because they understood that she was a special child chosen by God for a holy purpose, Joachim and Ann brought Mary to the Temple when she was very young and dedicated her to God.

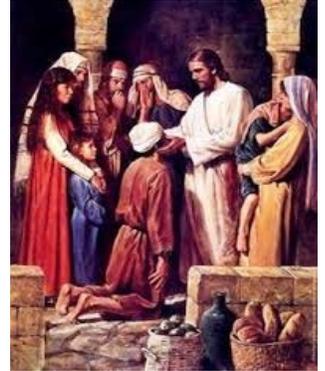
Mary responded to God's will for her life when the angel Gabriel appeared to her and she said "yes" to becoming the mother of Jesus. As we honor Mary on her birthday, let us ask her to pray for us, that we, too, may always be open to responding to God's will for our lives.

Sunday Gospel Connection: September 5, 2021

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B

Mark 7:31-37

Gospel Background: Today we continue to hear the Gospel of Mark proclaimed. In today's reading, Jesus heals a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. This is a story about Jesus' healing power, and in it we find clues about our understanding of sacrament. We are struck by the physical means used to heal the man, the use of spittle and touch. The Church continues to celebrate the sacraments using physical means. In the Sacrament of Baptism, water and oil are used to show the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, we are anointed with holy oil on the forehead and the hands. In the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. We are a sacramental people who believe that God's grace is given to us through these physical signs.



Some, however, see in this Gospel an image of the proclamation of the good news of Jesus to the Gentiles. The geographic references tell us that Jesus is journeying through Gentile territory. Jesus had previously visited this region and healed a person possessed by a demon. Jesus was already famous there, which explains why people brought the deaf man to him. The story that precedes this reading in Mark's Gospel sets the stage. Jesus encounters a Gentile, a Syrophenician woman who asks him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. Jesus engages her in a dialogue about not feeding to dogs the food intended for children. Jesus is struck by the woman's great faith when she replies that even dogs eat the food that falls from the table, and he heals her daughter immediately. The faith of this Greek woman compels Jesus to respond to her plea.

Mark shows that Jesus' own mission affirms the early Church's mission to the Gentiles. This was a significant issue to the early Christian community, which found that the good news of Jesus took root and spread quickly among the Gentiles. Yet there is an irony in the story of healing that Mark tells. Jesus gives the man the gift of speech, but then tells him not to use it. Jesus asks that the news of his healing power, which is evidence of his identity as the Messiah, not be spread. This is a recurring motif in Mark's Gospel and is sometimes called the "messianic secret."

Family Connection: Today's Gospel invites us to consider how we witness the healing presence of Christ in our care for and ministry to those who are sick. We notice that the deaf man is brought to Jesus for healing by his friends. These people beg Jesus to lay his hands on this deaf man so that he might be healed. Jesus' healing power is shown in his opening of the man's ears and the restoring of his speech. When family members care for one another when they are sick, they bring Christ's healing presence. When we pray for those who are ill, we ask God to show his healing power. When health is restored, we share that good news with others.

As you gather as a family, recall a time when a family member was ill. What steps were taken to help restore this family member to health? Talk about what it feels like to care for a person who is ill, and about how it feels to be the sick person being cared for. In today's Gospel, we hear about a time when Jesus healed a man who was deaf. Read today's Gospel, Mark 7:31-37. Notice how the man who was cured and his friends could not honor Jesus' request to keep quiet about Jesus' power to heal. We continue to celebrate Jesus' healing presence in our lives by giving thanks to God for the gift of healing and health. Conclude in prayer, thanking Jesus for the gifts of health and healing. Pray together for those who are sick. After each person is named, pray, "Jesus, heal us."

For more information and Sunday Connection resources visit:
<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/23rd-sunday-in-ordinary-time-b-sunday-connection/>

LOYOLA PRESS.
A JESUIT MINISTRY