

XXIII (SEPT 6) ISIAH 35: 4-7; JAMES 2: 1-5; MARK 7: 31-37

I remember, once a great philosopher has told, "God doesn't give you the people you want, He gives you the people you NEED - To help you, to support you, to be with you, to love you and to make you into the person you were meant to be." It is very true in my life and of course, it is true in each one's life.

Life is a beautiful gift when we are blessed with the gift of faithful and good friends. It was a privilege for me to be with Fr. Jim Carini at St. Matthew, Tolland for the last three years and he recommended me to be the administrator of this beautiful parish at Preston. He had a lot of things to tell about you and the place. St. Matthew remains an inspiration to me.

I am very happy to be here with you and thank you so much for your warm welcome. As a Parish community, let us keep Jesus in front and follow him faithfully and make this journey of life wonderful and peaceful. Now let me come to the Gospel of today.

"He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."

It's Labor Day weekend. Summer is over, but the beautiful days of autumn are still to come. There is a sense of beginning with the starting of the school year, yet little excitement for most people. In many ways, this is just another ordinary day.

For the deaf man in the Gospel it was almost certainly an ordinary day. He may not have known who Jesus was. He did not seek healing or change. Like most of us, he was probably comfortable with the situation. He did not expect to be touched by God or to have his life changed.

Yet God came to him, touched him and healed him because of a few friends, a few ordinary people, who wanted to help him to find Jesus.

God's love in action: What we heard in the Gospel is not simply the healing of a physical defect, but a concrete sign of the transforming power of God's Love. The power of God's Love is working in our lives to transform sorrow into joy, sickness into health, death into new life. The miracle is not only

about the physical healing of person who was deaf and dumb. It also points to the opening of a person's ears so that he may hear the word of God, and loosening of his tongue so that he may speak his profession of faith in Jesus. The miracle has great relevance to us, because a person can have perfect hearing, and yet not hear the word of God, have perfect speech, and yet be unable to make an act of faith.

Today Jesus invites us to lend him our hearts so that he may touch the lives of people through us, just as he touched the lives of millions through saintly souls like Francis of Assisi, Fr. Damien, Vincent de Paul and Mother Teresa and many.

Let our community be a source OR instrument of love, mercy, and compassion to heal and to be healed.