

Dear Padre,

Martyrs and people who commit suicide willingly sacrifice their lives, so how are they different? If I deliberately put myself in a position to be killed—even for a worthy cause—isn't that a form of suicide?

Life is a gift from God. While both martyrdom and suicide contradict the natural human disposition to preserve and perpetuate life, the former is a totally self-giving act; the latter, a self-inflicted one.

The early Church believed that martyrs went directly to heaven because their sacrifice of life was the ultimate Christlike expression. Their courageous endurance of indignities and tortures—their heroic willingness to die in defense of the faith or to save another's life—demonstrates a supreme love of God and neighbor over love for life itself (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2473*).

Those who take their own lives to end personal suffering or despair make a decision that belongs to God alone. It's an action that can revolve totally around the "self," often with little thought given to its consequences. It's a sin against hope (CCC 2091) that reveals a lack of faith and trust in God. Conversely, martyrdom is a profound expression of faith, trust, and hope in God. Nevertheless, our compassionate God fully knows the intensity of suffering that triggers suicide and "can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance" (CCC 2283).

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

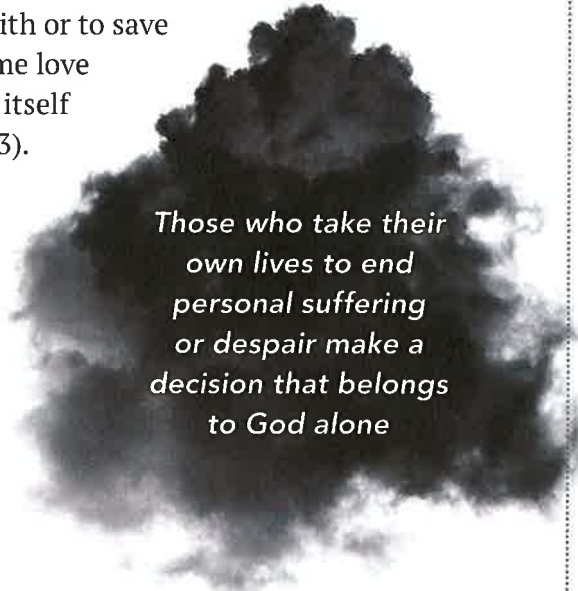
Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Remember that story about the poor widow lady...Her husband had committed suicide; he jumped from the bridge into the river. And she wept. She said, "I am a sinner, a poor woman. But my poor husband! He is in hell."...And the Curé of Ars said, "But wait a moment, ma'am, because between the bridge and the river, there is the mercy of God."

HOMILY, MARCH 18, 2019



Those who take their own lives to end personal suffering or despair make a decision that belongs to God alone

Calendar

Monday
SEPTEMBER 6
Weekday
Col 1:24—2:3
Lk 6:6–11

Tuesday
SEPTEMBER 7
Weekday
Col 2:6–15
Lk 6:12–19

Wednesday
SEPTEMBER 8
The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Mi 5:1–4a or
Rom 8:28–30
Mt 1:1–16, 18–23, or
1:18–23

Thursday
SEPTEMBER 9
St. Peter Claver, Priest
Col 3:12–17
Lk 6:27–38

Friday
SEPTEMBER 10
Weekday
1 Tm 1:1–2, 12–14
Lk 6:39–42

Saturday
SEPTEMBER 11
Weekday
1 Tm 1:15–17
Lk 6:43–49

Sunday
SEPTEMBER 12
Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Is 50:4c–9a
Jas 2:14–18
Mk 8:27–35



Our Parish COMMUNITY

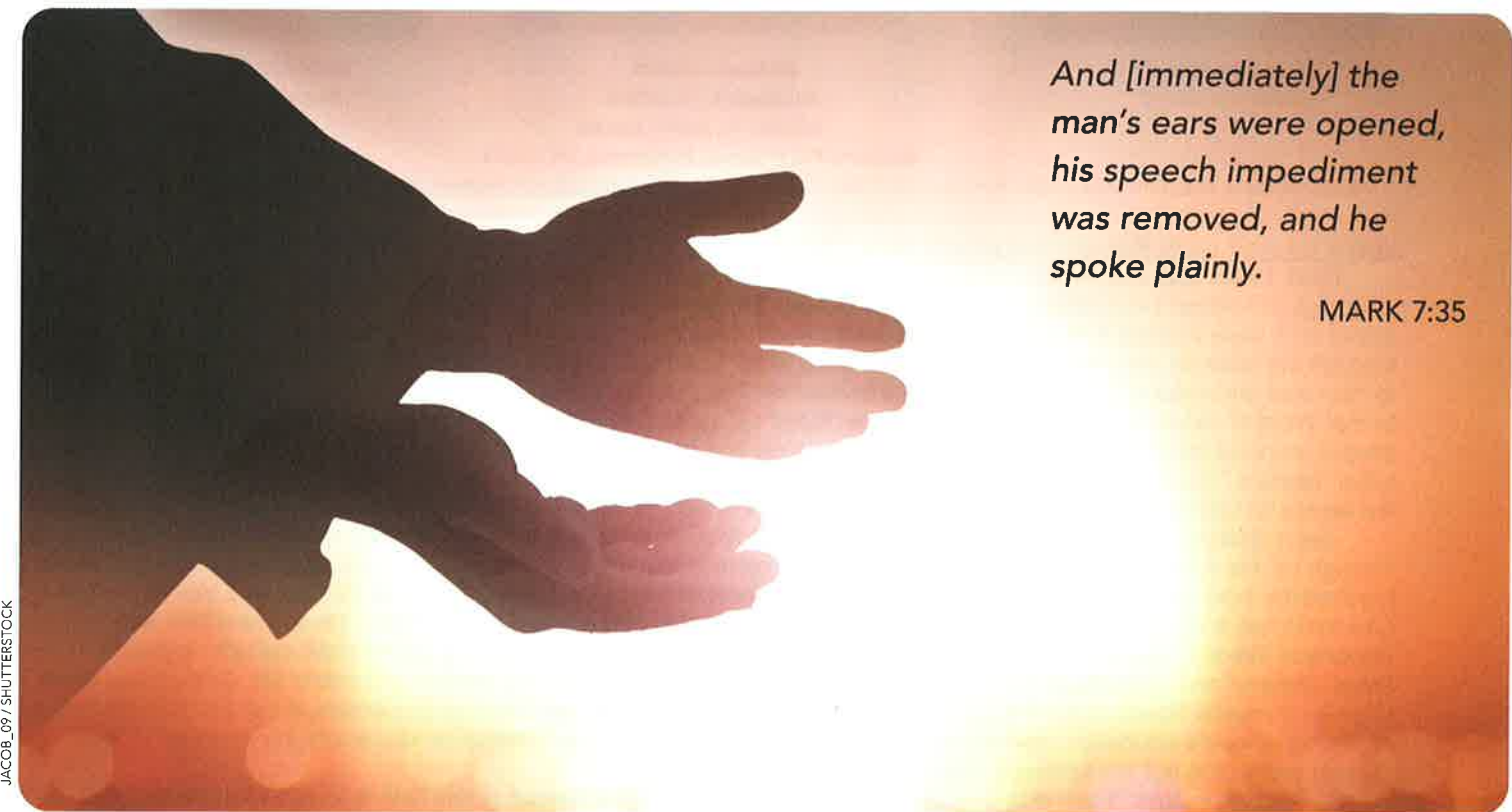
September 5, 2021

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Is 35:4–7a

Jas 2:1–5

Mk 7:31–37



And [immediately] the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly.

MARK 7:35

He Has Done All Things Well

Deep in the heart of each of us is a desire for a perfect world—a world of peace and harmony, where life flourishes and people care for one another. From beginning to end, our religious tradition promises that such a world is just ahead of us. Today's readings assure us that physical obstacles will not prevent its accomplishment, because the graciousness of God is stronger than any other power.

Today's reading from Isaiah instructs us: "Be strong, do not fear!" (35:4). It encourages us to believe in this promise of ultimate fulfillment and to trust that God will see it through. Our focus changes slightly in the Gospel passage. What was a promise of the future for Isaiah bursts forth as a reality in the Gospel, where the healing of broken bodies and troubled lives is realized by the warm words and gentle touch of Jesus.

Do such miracles really happen? Or are these fanciful stories that provide hope for people with little scientific understanding? Are miracles real? Of course they are. However, their true meaning might be much more profound than we realize. A miracle is a manifestation of divine power far beyond human control or comprehension. It is an experience of being made whole again, an occurrence in which peace and harmony are reestablished. Sometimes a miracle is spectacular; at other times it is far too deep to be seen. But always it is God working in our lives to create us anew.

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- ★ *Where does your life need healing? What are you doing about it?*
- ★ *How might you be a source of healing in the lives of others?*



St. Mary's Church
Dalton, NE 69131



All Souls' Church
Bridgeport, NE 69336
Pastor: Fr. James Joseph



Sacred Heart Church
Bayard, NE 69334

Address: 701 P Street, Bridgeport, NE 69336

Parish Office & Fax: (308)262-0709. Rectory: (308)262-1332 Email: allsoulsbridgeport@gmail.com Website: www.smassh Catholics.org

Jesus Looked up to Heaven and said to Him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!") – Mark 7:31-37

Mark Twain said that "Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can read." Jesus spoke the language of kindness very eloquently in today's Gospel. He spoke the word, "Ephphatha!" which means "Open up." And the man's ears were opened and his tongue was freed. At our baptism and through the grace that was conferred then, Jesus through the minister, touched our ears and spoke the word 'Ephphatha!' Be opened! In that moment, we received the power to hear and understand God's Word. This is a greater miracle than the cure of physical deafness. We must remain attentive to that Word of Jesus "Ephphatha!" which means "Open up" and allow it to take root in us. Then, like the deaf man in the gospel, we shall become witnesses to that Word in all we are, in all we say, in all we do. Why then do we crowd around other "healers," hoping to get quick fixes for our current problems? We tune into "Dr. Phil" and seek emotional cures from the advice columnists in our newspapers. But the quick fix is not the cure. Our faith is the cure.

Jesus desires to give us his healing touch in order to loosen our tongues so that he may speak to the spiritually hungry through us. He invites us to lend him our hearts so that he may touch the lives of people in our day 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. Like them, we are also invited to become the voice of the "poorest of the poor," the helpless, the downtrodden and the unwanted. We are asked to open the mind and hearts of a generation blighted by the materialistic cultural aggression of our times. Religion and God are allowed no place in schools, colleges, court rooms, politics and public life. One cannot speak of virginity or marital fidelity without a contemptuous laugh from others. We are told that 65 percent of our Catholic youth have no formal religious education beyond the eighth grade. It is possible to meet Catholics who are highly qualified in their secular profession but are basically illiterate in their faith.

St. Augustine said: "Faith is to believe what we do not see; and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe." The healing story in today's Gospel calls us to "open up" and not only hear the word, but to proclaim it with our lips. The readings invite us to become humble instruments of healing in Jesus' hands by giving voice to the needy and the marginalized in our society. This demands that we open our ears to hear God's Word and loosen our tongues to convey the good news of God's love and salvation to others. What we see is not simply the healing of a physical defect, but God's love in action, the 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 dumb man who is unable to communicate also symbolizes our own communication problem with God. In order to perceive and proclaim God's message, we need to be transformed. All the three readings speak of a God who favored the voiceless and afflicted. Today, however, we have lost the ability to recognize the voice of God calling us into action in our society, to give hearing and voice to the deaf and the mute. A church that is to witness to the example of Jesus' love must favor "those who are bowed down." Through its healing presence the church must give voice to the voiceless.

Reaching out to the poor, to the sick is a fundamental ministry of Christianity. To heal a person is to make our Church whole. God's attitude must be ours. The world can know that we are Christians only by our love. Let us become aware of spiritual as well as material poverty in all people, including ourselves. Let our Christianity be practical and true. Let us be open in the way of Christ to the needs of the most desperate, wherever we find them. Let us care.

SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK

| Date | Day | Time | Place | Intention |
|------|-----------|---------------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| 9/6 | Monday | No Mass Today | | |
| 9/7 | Tuesday | 6:00 PM | Bridgeport | † Don Loxterkamp |
| 9/8 | Wednesday | No Mass Today | | |
| 9/9 | Thursday | 6:00 PM | Dalton | † Hal Brown |
| 9/10 | Friday | 12:00 Noon | Bayard | † Ted Tafoya, Jr. |
| 9/11 | Saturday | 5.30 PM | Dalton | † Shane Ernest |
| 9/12 | Sunday | 8.00 AM | Bayard | Special intention of Regina DeFoe |
| 9/12 | Sunday | 10.30 AM | Bridgeport | For People of the Parish |

**ALL SOULS
617 P STREET
BRIDGEPORT NE 69336**

MASS TIME
Tuesday – 6:00 PM
Sunday – 10:30 AM



OUR GIFTS TO GOD & CHURCH

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| ADULTS | \$260.00 |
| CHILDREN | |
| PLATE | \$94.00 |
| SUBTOTAL | \$ 354.00 |
| CANDLES | \$27.46 |
| ASSUMPTION | \$25.00 |
| TOTAL | \$ 406.46 |
| BUILDING FUND | |
| APPEAL GOAL | \$6,046.00 |
| DONATIONS | \$3,815.00 |
| BALANCE | \$2,231.00 |

- Prayer line requests may be made to Carolyn-262-0453 or Teresa-262-0439.
- The rosary is prayed ½ hr before Mass, please come and pray.
- Registration for religious education classes will be Sept. 15 at 6:30 for all grades, followed by their first class. A schedule will be given out that night. Contact Bev Sestak with questions.

**SACRED HEART
1003 AVE B
BAYARD NE 69334**

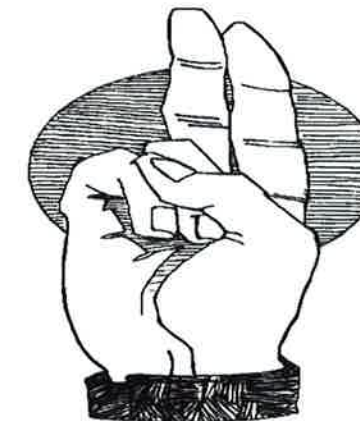
MASS TIME
Friday – 12:00 NOON
Sunday – 8:00 AM



OUR GIFTS TO GOD & CHURCH

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| ADULTS | \$200.00 |
| CHILDREN | |
| PLATE | \$355.00 |
| SUBTOTAL | \$ 555.00 |
| MASS STIPEND | |
| TOTAL | \$ 555.00 |
| BUILDING FUND | |
| APPEAL GOAL | \$4,907.00 |
| DONATIONS | \$3,165.00 |
| BALANCE | \$1,742.00 |

- Prayer line requests may be made to Paula-586-2992.
- The rosary is prayed ½ hr before Mass, please come and pray.



**SAINT MARY'S
718 FRANCIS ST
DALTON NE 69131**

MASS TIME
Thursday – 6:00 PM
Saturday – 5:30 PM



OUR GIFTS TO GOD & CHURCH

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| ADULTS | \$305.00 |
| CHILDREN | |
| PLATE | \$3.00 |
| SUBTOTAL | \$ 308.00 |
| MASS STIPEND | |
| TOTAL | \$ 308.00 |
| BUILDING FUND | |
| APPEAL GOAL | \$6,136.00 |
| DONATIONS | \$6,439.00 |
| BALANCE | (\$303.00) |

- Prayer line requests may be made to DeAnn-249-1735.
- The rosary is prayed ½ hr before Mass, please come and pray.

