TWENTY - THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME   09/5/ 021.

 I will not forget my first Thanksgiving Day in New Jersey when a family took me for that celebration. After the meal all siblings and I were sitting around in the living room.

A grand mother who was up in age, delicate in health and very hard of hearing sat on the couch with her eyes closed as if half-asleep.

Thinking she couldn't be hearing the siblings softly began discussing what hymns and scripture readings would be appropriate for funeral when the time came, all of a sudden, she surprised us by opening her eyes and smile said, "When are you planning to have this funeral?"

If we are honest, don't we often do the same - we hear only what we want to hear? That is, we find it easy to be DEAF to the hard saying of the Gospel.

In today's Gospel we see Jesus curing a man of his deafness. The Good News is that "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever" and wherever there is deafness in our lives He says the

"**Ephphatha - Be opened**!"

For example, to our Hearts he reaches out and touches them, "saying "Be opened- open up to:

   i.   **Forgiveness** where there has been injury;
   ii.   **Care & concern** where there has been indifference;
   iii.   **Faith & Trust** where there has been unbelief and fear;
   iv.   **Lov**e - open up to loving even those we consider enemy.

To our "Heads" that is, our **minds,** Jesus reaches out and touches them saying, "Be opened - open up to:

- **Wisdom** - the beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord - that is, seeking always to do that which is pleasing to God;
- **Truth** - Jesus is the Truth - in Him are found all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;
- **Life** - that is, Eternal Life - Divine Life - the life Christ has come to share with us that we might have it and have it more abundantly.

In conclusion, it is most helpful to find some quiet time each day and as Jesus went aside with the deaf man in today's Gospel, for you and me to go aside and let the Lord open our hearts, hands, and heads to wherever we are closed.