

Homily for 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Someone once asked me where I get my stories for my homilies. I usually get them from people...from watching people. Such was the case when I attended a wedding reception many years ago. I knew hardly anyone and passed the time waiting to offer the blessing for the meal by people-watching. One woman in particular stood out. She was adroitly moving from one person to the next. She was definitely “working the hall”. Each and every time she encountered someone she would speak quickly and let them know how delighted she was to see them and then move on.

One person she encountered was not very cheery. When the woman traveling through the room approached her, she asked “How are you doing?” The woman who looked a bit down responded that she wasn’t doing well. Her husband was very ill and she was very concerned for him. “Oh, how wonderful,” exclaimed the woman working the crowd. “We can speak more about this later,” I heard her say as she continued on her journey through the hall. The woman to whom she spoke was left looking bewildered.

I felt badly as I watched this sad human encounter. One woman carrying a heavy cross in her heart; the other, “making the rounds” and

listening to no one. I felt badly that this woman with the charming personality could hear words of this worried wife without really listening to them. However, before we get too judgmental, let's look at our own lives. How often do we hear without listening?

That's the challenge before us today. Do we listen to the voice of God? Or do we just hear God's voice? Do we let the words of Christ sink into our hearts? Or are they just a stream of words that go in one ear and out the other?

In the Gospel today Christ gives the gift of hearing. He proclaims "be opened" and the ears of the deaf man suddenly are able to listen. Perhaps we need to pray that our own ears might be opened and we might be able to listen to the voice of God piercing through the chatter and clutter of our own culture in our own time. We pray that we might listen to God's voice coming to us in the poor, the lonely, the broken-hearted and the abandoned.

This weekend we take time to honor Mary, the patron of our Parish. It is Mary who tells us to "do whatever he tells you." If we cannot hear, than we cannot do and if we cannot "do" then the direction of Mary falls on deaf ears. Perhaps we need to pray: open my ears O Lord, that I might open my heart so that I might follow your command.