

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time,
September 9, 2018

When the call went out asking for more volunteers to step up and write a *reflection*, I answered the call. I was quite astonished to receive this Sunday's readings that hit a soft spot like a special calling to me personally. It's like it was a calling within a calling. I had a significant loss of hearing the Monday after this reading three years ago (signifying our liturgy B cycle). Hearing is alluded to in all three of the readings. I had a fear and a new form of loneliness to deal with. Good listening skills are an admirable trait. I didn't know I was such a good listener until it was taken away.

Revisiting this verse has special meaning (or milestone), not about regaining my hearing, but hope and listening. Learning to adjust to the bubble of silence. As my interpersonal communication was compromised with lack of understanding, people seemed to avoid me, thinking I'm no longer communicable.

Well enough about my problems. Some of my readers may be thinking that the second reading allows you to dress down for church. Let's focus on these individually.

Reading 1 Isaiah 35:4-7a

"Be strong fear not!" Jesus addresses our fears and troubles about being saved. This is truly a message of hope! Eyes will be opened and the ears of the deaf be cleared. We often focus on our troubles here and now but there is hope. My personal favorite motto: "When life gets you down, pet the dog."

Reading 2 James 2:1-5

The first impression of this reading may seem to say "you don't have to wear your Sunday best to church". We've all seen someone, somewhere dressed inappropriately for an occasion. If that's all you get out of this reading, you may have missed the point. That's different than what this reading is all about. The point here is *partiality* based on wealth. Dress is not necessarily an indicator of wealth these days. Your possessions are not a sign of wealth especially if you are familiar with "Financial Peace University".

Gospel Mark 7:31-37

Today's Gospel tells us to "be opened!" in an example of healing a deaf man. Jesus did a miracle by allowing a deaf man to hear. Meanwhile he ordered witnesses not to tell but they did. Maybe the witnesses needed to listen more.

Blessings to all and have a great week,
Rosemary Connolly