

Homily for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Scriptures for today

Are there some things you and I just don't want to hear?

I know there are things I don't want to hear...

- I don't want to hear bad news.
- I don't want to hear words that hurt me.
- I don't always want to hear the truth about myself.
- And when I'm really convinced that I'm right -
I don't want to hear that I'm wrong.
- I don't want to hear myself being called
to do something I don't really want to do.
- And as much as I believe
I want to know what God is thinking,
I don't always want to hear what God has to say -
especially when I think I'm right about something
and God thinks I'm wrong.

Very often, I just don't hear what I don't *want* to hear
because I screen out what I don't want to hear.

I think this has been a problem since my youth
when my parents used to tell me I had "selective hearing!"

It's interesting that in today's gospel Jesus heals the deaf man
by putting his finger in the man's ears.

The deafness of "selective hearing" is cured
not so much by putting fingers *in* your ears,
but, rather, by taking them *out*.

In spite of hearing aids and ear phones and ear buds
and stereo and surround-sound speakers of all kinds -
all letting us listen to just about anything we want to hear,
wherever we are -
still, ours is a generation that often turns a deaf ear
to the Lord's voice.

Perhaps the miracle we need the Lord to work for us today
is for him to take our fingers out of our own ears
that we might hear the voice and the Word of God.

Let me go back to my original question:

"Are there some things you and I just don't want to hear?"

Are there some things God might be trying to tell us
that we just don't want to hear?

I'll close my homily with a prayer I wrote
as I reflected on my own "selective hearing."
It might be a prayer you will find helpful, too.

*Open my ears, Lord,
and teach me to listen to what I hear...*

*Open my ears to your voice,
to your Word,
to your truth, to your law...*

Open my ears to your calling my name...

Open my ears to the hard sayings I don't want to hear...

Open my ears to the truth about myself...

*Open my ears when you judge me, correct me,
forgive me and tell me of your love...*

*Open my ears to hear what you ask of me,
Open my ears to the cry of the poor...*

*Open my ears to the voices of family and friends.
Open my ears to the whispers of your Holy Spirit
guiding me along the right path...*

*Open my ears to the silence
of your presence in my heart...*

Open my ears to the prayer of those around me...

*Open my ears to the breaking of the bread at your table,
to the pouring of wine into cups...*

*Open my ears
and let me hear in the breaking and the pouring
the gift of your life being offered that I might live...*

*Open my ears to your love, Lord,
and nourish me with faith and strength and courage
to speak, to sing, to shout, to share
the Word you speak,
the Word I hear...*

-Rev. Austin H. Fleming