

23rd SUNDAY YEAR B 2021.

CONTACT WITH THE WORLD OF THE DEAF AND DUMB.

Disability is a great challenge in some societies and especially in the third world. In some cultures, especially in Africa, to be born with any disability is considered a **curse and a bad omen, the person becomes an outcast in the society.** Such people are **vulnerable, stressed, neglected, and traumatized.** In Kenya the church has taken the initiative by rescuing such people, taking care of them and positively educating the society over the importance of accepting those with disabilities as part of the society. We can take some gifts we have for granted and assume they are just there, like sight, hearing, and talking. Imagine not connecting with the world around you, like the sounds and beautiful sights and not being able to communicate!

In today's Gospel teaching, Jesus enters the isolated world of the deaf person. The mission and vision are clear in the Prophet Isaiah's message of **Hope** in the first reading encouraging the people not to lose hope. He tells us that God will rescue them and He will **set them free, the eyes of the blind will open, the ears of the deaf will be unsealed, the lame will leap for joy and the tongue of the dumb will sing.** The same message was echoed by Jesus to John's disciples. **Go and say what you see, the blind can see, the lame can work, the deaf can hear, and the Gospel is preached to the poor.** This prophesy is seen in practice as Jesus attends to this person and cures him.

St. James gives us the remedy by telling us we need to treat and appreciate all people the same, regardless of their status, political, or religious cultural affiliations. They are all sons and daughters of God. There should be no **discrimination, favoritism, or prejudice.** All should be accorded the same respect. We must not be quick to judge by superficial standards of looks and image.

We are called to seek the gifts of **sight, healing, and speech** which are very powerful tools to put our suffering world and society into order. We must see in all people what Jesus saw. All are created in the image and likeness of God and have value despite the challenges and weaknesses as human beings. We are all in need of redemption and healing.

We need that gift of **speech to tell the world the sanctity and value of life in war-torn areas of Afghanistan and in the unborn. To give hope and confidence to the people of Haiti devastated by the earthquake, those effected by the hurricane, and those who suffer from fires in different states. They need a message OF HOPE and a hand, “NOW NOT TOMORROW. “**

We need the gift of speech to tell the world of **justice and fairness in business and the employment sector. We need that gift not only of talking but of speaking of corruption and unjust politics in the world. We are called to see, hear, and speak for these people who the society disregards and ignores. We must stand by those who are emotionally troubled and burdened by disability.**

This is the mission of the church today. The call is to hear, see, and speak as Christ did. That is why we are Christians. We are called to give hope and a cure.

The greatest tragedy in the society today is not to be born deaf, dumb, or blind BUT :

To have ears fail and refuse to hear.

To have eyes fail and refuse to see.

To have a tongue fail and refuse to speak.

We need the healing touch that we may be receptive to the needs of others and hear and proclaim the word in our time.