

SEPTEMBER 15-16, 2018

LAST WEEK OLC BEGAN A MESSAGE SERIES OF HOMILIES

- That we are calling “Be Open – to Journey with Jesus”
- Last week’s Gospel had Jesus healing the deaf and mute person
 - o By an unusual ritual involving spit and dirt
 - o And uttering the word – EPHPHATHA – that is – be opened
- Through this miraculous encounter with Jesus
 - o The person was able to hear and speak
 - And although was told not to tell anyone about what happened
 - Went about telling everyone what Jesus did
 - I mean how could he not
 - People were bound to ask him how his cure came about

I ALSO SPOKE ABOUT HOW WE TOO, AT TIMES

- Can be deaf or mute or blind in our daily lives
 - o Carrying around baggage or struggles or things that keep us away from God
 - o And how a personal encounter with Jesus can heal us and change us
- There may be parts of our lives that are closed off
 - o To the words of Jesus or to what God is asking us to do
 - o And it can leave us doubting or questioning or even walking away from God
 - Sometimes it is our fault
 - And sometimes it is because of the actions of others
- But God wants us to Be Open to him
 - o As God is open to us and is always inviting us into a relationship
 - Through Jesus Christ

THIS WEEK WE ARE BEING ASKED TO BE OPEN

- To asking the question of who is Jesus Christ?
 - o Who do you say that the Son of man is?
 - And how opened are we to learning about Jesus?
- This is the perfect weekend for this discussion
 - o Because it is also Catechetical Sunday or Good New Sunday
 - The day we kick off our ministries of teaching the faith to our parishioners
 - Whether you are kids, or teens, or adults
 - And we will bless our teachers and catechists today
 - The peers and adults who will be sharing with us
 - o Who Jesus Christ is to them
 - With the goal of drawing all of us closer to God
 - o And being opened to the good news of Jesus Christ
 - o Even in the midst of the challenges we may face

OVER 2,000 YEARS AGO

- Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, was born into human history

- And although we do not know much about his early years here on earth
- We do have the accounts of his years of ministry
 - Which culminate in his passion, death on the cross, and resurrection
- But before that, we have many written pages about his words and his actions
 - How he walked among us
 - Curing the sick, preaching the kingdom of God
 - Inviting everyone to come to know him
 - And through him to know God
 - Quite naturally, people began to take notice of him
 - I mean if someone today was doing the things Jesus was doing
 - We would certainly hear about it and be drawn to it
 - So they were asking who was this miracle worker
 - Where did he come from? What is he saying and doing?
 - Can he cure me or my relative or friend?
 - Jesus was inspiring hope in people's lives
 - And opening their hearts and minds to wanting
 - Not only know more about him
 - But more importantly, to know him personally
 - So that he can meet us where we are
 - And journey with us to where he wants us to go

OUR GOSPEL TODAY IS ABOUT THIS QUESTION

- Who do people say that Jesus is?
 - It is a question that Jesus is asking his disciples for whatever reason
 - Maybe to see how well his mission has been going
 - Or to see if they have begun to understand who he really is
 - We don't know why he is asking for sure
- But we do know that Peter understands who Jesus is – He is the Christ
 - He is the one that has been foretold by the prophets
 - And whom they have been awaiting for centuries
- But even though Peter knows the right answer
 - He still does not know Jesus, nor understands his ultimate mission
 - That the Christ must suffer, die and rise after three days
 - To seal God's covenant with all of humanity
 - God's plan to save and restore us sinners to holiness
- There is so much more here than just that Jesus was a good man
 - Or that Jesus went about doing good deeds
 - Or that Jesus had some great parables
 - It is really the love story of God's love for humanity – for all of us
 - That God's only Son had to suffer and die for us
 - In order for us to have new life in Christ
- But as we see in the Gospel
 - Peter's mind was not open to this good news
 - On the contrary, he didn't want to believe it in the first place
 - His mind was closed to the unique and unexpected ways of God

THIS WEEKEND, AS WE CELEBRATE GOOD NEWS SUNDAY

- I believe we need to ask ourselves the very same question Jesus asks in the Gospel
 - o Who do you say that Jesus is?
 - And as a follow up – what does it mean to know who Jesus is?
- I think we know a lot of facts about Jesus
 - o We know his birthday, we know his parents' names, etc.
 - We know things about Jesus
- But the deeper meaning to the question has to do with ourselves
 - o Who is Jesus in relationship to who I am, and what I do, and how I live my life
 - Do I know Jesus well enough to serve him in the poor?
 - Do I know Jesus well enough to trust him in times of troubles?
 - Do I know Jesus well enough to see that the Church is His Church?
 - Do I know Jesus well enough to suffer and die for my faith?
- It is good to know facts about Jesus
 - o But it is more important to know Jesus personally
 - To have a relationship with him that is deep, intimate, and loving
 - A relationship that will allow us to journey with him
 - By being his disciple

THIS WEEK

- I would ask us to sit with these questions
 - o Who do I think Jesus is?
 - o And what impact does this have on my life?
- Knowing Jesus Christ as our Lord, and having a personal relationship with him
 - o Ought to change us totally and completely
 - It ought to change the way I view the problems of our world
 - And change how I response to them
 - It ought to change the way I speak to others
 - And how I treat those whom I don't necessarily like
 - o Or find difficult to love
 - It ought to change the priorities I set for myself in my life
 - Making sure that God is at the center of my life
 - o And not on the peripheries of my life
- All of this is possible if only I am Open to a relationship with Jesus
 - o And desire to have this personal relationship with him

FOR HAVING A PESONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

- Should be and feel like a radical life changing event
 - o Not unlike what it felt like when we first fell in love
 - With our high school sweetheart or our spouse
 - Or saw our child or grandchild for the first time
- If our relationship with Jesus isn't like then, then maybe we don't know Jesus as well as we should
 - o So Be Open to Journey with Jesus