

February 11, 2022,  
Liturgy of the Word  
1 Kings, 11:29-32; 12-19;  
Psalm 81:10-15;  
Mart 7:31-37  
Gail Addis

In her book, "Praying with Julian of Norwich", Gloria Durka writes "True spirituality is intimately involved in the anguish of the world. It is the fruit of compassion and contemplation. Spirituality must be earthy, caring, compassionate, involved and committed," p.37 Today's Gospel is probably one of the most graphic stories of healing in the bible and the healing is a clear example of Jesus' spirituality in action.

Jesus uses symbolic gestures that can be found in our baptismal liturgy. He does a wonderful thing; he heals a man who is unable to speak or hear. He restores the man to his community, he can now participate because he hears and he can share his thoughts because he can speak. He can tell people he loves them and hear those words said back to him. He can contribute. He is no longer looking in from the outside. **This is good news!** Who wouldn't want to shout it from the house tops?

Yet, Jesus orders those present not to tell anyone what he has done and who he is. In Mark's gospel, this keeping quiet about Jesus' healings, is called the Messianic Secret. Jesus' hour had not yet come. On another level, it seems like Jesus just wants to minister to people and not make a name for himself. He even takes the man away from the crowd to heal him, no fanfare, no miraculous display of power. . . just touching and spitting (saliva was thought to have healing properties) and a word: "be opened" Jesus simply cares about the individual in front of him and, in his compassion, responds to the man's needs

It reminds me of a saying from an unknown author: "The significance of one's life is not measured by the fame and glory of this world or the material things we have, but by the love and compassion shown to others, everyday of your life without fame or glory or thanks just in the name of love and maybe all the little things we do for one another is the most significant thing you and I might do in our lifetime."

We are the presence of God in the world. We are to show the same care and compassion for others on our path as Jesus showed. But we are also the man in need of healing. What happened in this story is meant to happen to all of us, individually and collectively. We need our ears opened that we might hear like a disciple. Then, having heard and understood, we are sent out to proclaim what God is doing in our lives and in the world. We are not to keep it secret!

As my second-grade student, Tim Daniels, so wisely observed many years ago when I asked what it means to listen to God's word. "It means to put it in your heart and act on it." As the psalm today reminds us, "I am the Lord your God; hear my voice...and walk in my ways."

