

## Homily Ideas for

The Twenty-Third Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)  
Day before Labor Day

From the reading from Isaiah: "...eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then the lame will leap...the tongue of the mute will sing..."

From the Responsorial Psalm (146): "...The Lord sets captives free,...gives sight to the blind,...raises up those who were bowed down..."

From the reading from James II: "...God choose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs to the kingdom..."

From the reading from the Gospel of Mark: "...the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment removed..."

- ❖ Today's readings speak of physical disabilities and the Lord's actions in removing them. These were fitting expressions for the peoples and cultures of 2 to 3 thousand years ago.
- ❖ In today's world we still have the physical disabilities and we have an awareness of spiritual disabilities, spiritual blindness, deafness, captivity, People are hurting in so many ways.
- ❖ Fittingly, on this Sunday before our national holiday honoring workers, Labor Day, we should consider how these readings might apply to our life in our workplaces be they places of employment, volunteer work, or in our homes and families.
- ❖ By baptism we are called to do the work of the Lord, to be his hands, so to speak, in our homes and workplaces. I'm not so sure that we can cure or remove the physical ailments of others or even of ourselves. Yet, we have the opportunity to be the hands of God in dealing with spiritual disabilities.
- ❖ When we provide a compassionate, non-judgmental ear for one in turmoil, we raise up one who was bowed down.
- ❖ When we treat co-workers and customers with respect, we set free a spirit that was marginalized.

- ❖ When speak and act in consistently ethical ways, we make it possible for the spiritually deaf and blind to hear and see.
- ❖ When we see and compliment the good others do when some see only the negative, we enable the lame to leap.
- ❖ When we seek to include those who are withdrawn or on the “outs,” we choose the poor to be rich in faith and heirs to the kingdom.
- ❖ When we offer or suggest an opportunity to help those less fortunate than those in the workplace, we are raising up those who were bowed down.
- ❖ When we refuse to participate in gossip or character assassination conversations, we offer sight to those blind to the hurt those things cause.
- ❖ When we tell the truth about our mistakes and accept the consequences, we enable the mute to speak up about their own problems and all grow from the experience.
- ❖ My mom reminded me of the impact that a single stand for decency can have. A childhood friend of mine told my mother, nearly 50 years after the fact, of the continuing impact of an act of mine that I had long forgotten. He and a few other friends had formed a small neighborhood gang, and I wanted to join. The price to join was to beat up someone. He told my mother that I refused and that refusal stayed with him. He grew up to become a fireman. I had forgotten the incident, but 50 years later it was still affecting him.

[Homilists are encouraged to substitute their own stories for the one provided here. If you do not have one you are willing to share, use this one and attribute to a writer reflecting on lessons learned from his mother.]

- ❖ Have no doubt that your actions are noticed and have an impact.
- ❖ If you wish to add reflection questions at the end of the homily, may I suggest these two.
  - What one act could you do tomorrow at work that would make the human hand of God present there?
  - What impact would that have on your work place if you were to continue performing that and similar actions?