


TO THE Heights

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Celebrating and Supporting the Catholic faith in our post-primary schools and amongst our young people.

 ascendwaterfordlismore.ym

 AscendWaterfordLismoreYM

 Ascend Youth Ministry



23RD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

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Year B

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Isaiah 35:4-7

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 145(146):7-10

Second Reading:

James 2:1-5

Gospel:

Mark 7:31-37

"Their admiration was unbounded... He makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak"

Game Changers

The Catholic Church's Liturgical Calendar is crammed full of inspirational saints, or as we like to call them, Game Changers!

Some weeks we'll focus in more detail on a particular saint who is an incredible role model for youth, but for now, check out the following feast-days!

If you missed our features on Fr Emil Kapaun and St Maximilian Kolbe you can find them on our [webpage](#)!

8 September

Nativity of the Bl. Virgin Mary

9 September

St Ciaran of Clonmacnois

10 September

St Peter Claver



Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have a Bible? No worries, click the bible!



Or watch a short animation of today's Gospel.



1. Who took the initiative in today's Gospel to ask Jesus for healing? Was it the man who could neither hear nor speak, or was it someone else? What can you take personally from that?
2. The people were astonished by this miracle. Read Isaiah 35:4-5 and see what one of the expectations of the Messiah was to be. How does that match with this story?
3. Look at how Jesus worked this miracle - the steps involved. Why do you think Jesus chose to take such a personal, one-to-one approach? What does that say about how Jesus relates to us today too?
4. What can prevent us from hearing God's message or proclaiming God's word in our lives?



"God does not need you to be perfect.
He just wants you to be His." - Fr Mike Schmitz -

EPHPHATHA

There's a lot going on with that spelling.... and even more going on with the consequence of the word. "Be opened" - and the man's hearing and ability to speak were restored to Him.

Such an unusual miracle, one that even outside of Covid times can make us uncomfortable! We're not used to that level of closeness or intimacy with Jesus. We might even avoid it. Why is that? Are we worried He'll see our flaws and our imperfections? Are we worried, He'll see the real us? Are we worried, deep-down, that we're imperfect, broken, a failure, unlovable?

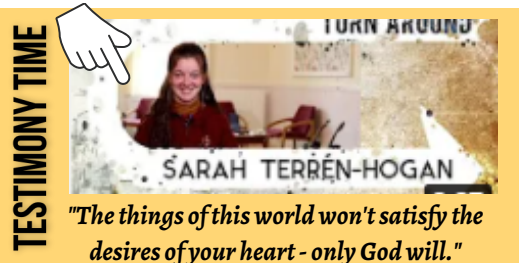
Are we deaf to hearing God tell us He loves us because we've filled our ears with messages telling us we're never good enough? Sometimes we're so afraid of what the world thinks, that we're afraid to even speak about our faith. We can find it difficult to affirm and build others up because of our insecurities. We all have a deafness and muteness that need healing.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE:

This week, spend time trying to hear God tell you that you are loved, you are chosen, you are His. See what opportunities He provides for you to build up others too, or speak about Him.

▶ Why God Loves You (Fr Mike)

- Use our attached handout to guide you!
- + Bonus Ideas to Celebrate Our Lady's birthday



TEACHER'S CORNER

SYMBOLON:

The Catholic Faith Explained



Too often we try to live a faith we don't know or understand. Every Catholic deserves to know their story. Join us for Symbolon, a 10-week series that presents the BIG picture of our Catholic faith. Ages 18+.

- Wednesdays 8 - 9.15pm on Zoom.
- Begins September 15th
- To register [click here](#) or email events@waterfordlismore.ie or call 085 8623705

Young Person's Prayer



God, despite all the messages I hear from the world, despite all my fears and insecurities and weaknesses, my true identity is found in You! Help me to believe the true message of the Gospel: You don't need me to be perfect, You just want me to be Yours. Thank you for your deeply-personal, never-ending, unconditional love. Amen

Gospel Reflection: WE ARE A SACRAMENTAL PEOPLE

This week, we continue to hear the Gospel of Mark proclaimed. In the Gospel reading, Jesus heals a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. This is a story that demonstrates Jesus' healing power, and in it we find some clues about our understanding of the Sacraments. There are seven Sacraments, instituted by Jesus, in the Catholic Church which we are able to receive at different times and stages in our life.

You might be struck by the physical means that Jesus used to heal the man, the use of spittle and touch. Jesus used a natural substance and action to bring about supernatural healing and restoration. Over two thousand years later, the Church continues to celebrate the sacraments using physical means. In the Sacrament of Baptism, for example, the child is baptised with water which the priest pours on their head. In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, people are anointed with holy oil on their forehead and hands. In the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ which we then receive. We are a sacramental people who believe that God's grace is given to us through these physical signs.

There is another big clue hidden in this week's Gospel. It is a clue about who Jesus is. The healing of this man points to the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy about the coming of God which we read in today's first reading: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unsealed. Then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy"

When Jesus puts his fingers into the man's ears and says "Be opened", he is deliberately fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy which foretold that when God comes the ears of the deaf will be opened. When he touches the man's tongue he is once again deliberately fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. Isaiah mentions that the eyes of the blind will also be opened which we have seen Jesus fulfil elsewhere in the Gospels. What is Jesus doing by his actions? He is deliberately doing the miracles Isaiah said God would do. The healing reveals Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah and it also reveals the divinity of Jesus.

CHECK IT OUT: UNIVERSALIS APP

The Universalis app gives you: A full liturgical calendar so that you know all the saints' days and feasts. Every Hour in the Liturgy of the Hours: Morning, Mid-Morning, Midday, Afternoon, Evening and Night Prayer, plus the wonderful Office of Readings. All the readings and prayers for Mass so you can follow them in church or read them at home. Lectio Divina for private or shared meditation. It lasts for ever and you never need to pay again. It doesn't need an Internet connection, so you can use it anywhere at any time.





Ephphatha! Be opened!

God doesn't need you to be perfect. He just wants you to be His.

JCRE: L0.2.2 / 2.4 / 2.7 / 3.1
SENIOR RE-NON-EXAM: A1 / A3 / B1 / G2 / G3 / H1

TRY TO THINK OF A TIME WHEN YOU REALLY FELT THAT SOMEONE CARED ABOUT YOU, WHEN THEY STOPPED WHAT THEY WERE DOING AND CAME TO YOU BECAUSE YOU NEEDED THEM. HOW DID YOU FEEL IN THAT MOMENT?



HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ABLE TO BE THAT PERSON FOR SOMEONE ELSE?





WATCH FR MIKE SCHMITZ' VIDEO: "WHY GOD LOVES YOU" AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW

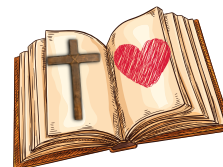
Reflecting on how his sister cared for his little niece when she was sick, Fr Mike says there are two attitudes the human heart can develop based on how people respond to us when we're in need:



I'm chosen, I'm loved when I'm at my _____
or I'm chosen, I'm loved when I'm at my _____

THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTIANITY IS THIS:

God does not love us _____ of our weakness, but _____ of our weakness.



But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

MANY OF US BELIEVE THE ANTI-GOSPEL WHICH TEACHES THAT:

In order to be CHOSEN you've got to be _____.



In order to be LOVED you've got to be _____.

In order to BELONG to someone, enough for people to stop what they're doing and come and be with you, you have to be w_____, strong, h_____, great and s_____.



WHAT'S THE MESSAGE OF THE REAL GOSPEL?



- In order to be redeemed by Jesus you have to be _____.
- In order to be loved by God you have to be, in some ways, _____.
- In order to be made righteous you have to be someone who's _____.

FR MIKE SAYS THAT SO MANY CHRISTIANS DISQUALIFY THEMSELVES, SAYING: "I'M TOO _____, I'M TOO MUCH OF A _____, I'M TOO _____." REMEMBER, THAT IS NEVER TRUE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

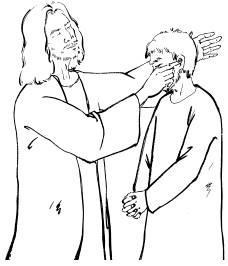
- ASCEND YOUTH MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -



"EPHATHA! BE OPENED!"

MARK 7:31-37

Now Read Mark 7:31-37



The deaf and mute man was brought by some friends to Jesus to be healed. Jesus looked at him with compassion and bringing him away from the crowd, looked up to heaven, sighed and said, "Ephphatha" (Be opened) and healed him with a deeply personal touch. Those who saw the miracle were amazed and spread the news. Isaiah 35:4-7 prophesies that when the Messiah comes, "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, the lame shall leap like deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy". They would have been aware of that scripture passage.

Do you believe that Jesus can work miracles in your life? Physical miracles? Spiritual miracles? That He can heal your emotional wounds too, and set you free?

Will you allow yourself to "be opened" this week, to allow Jesus to take you away from the crowd, to look you in the eyes, place his healing hands on your weaknesses and fears, and say "Ephphatha"?

Pray for the grace to want to be open to that transformation!

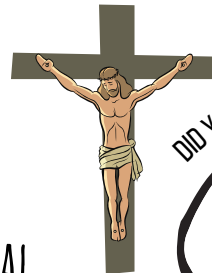


THE TRUE GOSPEL HOWEVER, TEACHES US THIS:

When I'm in need, the Lord _____.

When I'm stuck, the Lord _____.

When I'm dying, the Lord _____.



DID YOU KNOW? JESUS SAID TO ST FAUSTINA:

I perform works of mercy in every soul. The greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy.

(Diary of Saint Faustina, 723)

YOU'RE NOT CHOSEN BECAUSE YOU'RE SPECIAL.
YOU'RE SPECIAL BECAUSE YOU'RE CHOSEN!



MISSION!

Who can you affirm and support this week? Look for opportunities to show others that they are loved, special, worthy simply as they are. Be a reflection of God's love in the world this week as you open your own heart to receiving His love too!

PRAYER TIME!

God, despite all the messages I hear from the world, despite all my tears and insecurities and weaknesses, my true identity is found in You! Help me to believe the true message of the Gospel: You don't need me to be perfect, You just want me to be Yours. Thank you for your deeply-personal, never-ending, unconditional love. Amen



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON WHAT'S INSIDE YOUR HEART THIS WEEK



- [Broken Vessels \(Hillsong\)](#)
- [Healer of my Soul \(Tribes and Tongues\)](#)
- [Open my eyes \(Jesse Manibusan\)](#)
- [Healer of my soul \(John Michael Talbot\)](#)
- [Closer \(Amanda Cook\)](#)
- [Just one touch \(Kim Walker\)](#)
- [Healer \(Kari Jobe\)](#)
- [Hold on to me \(Lauren Daigle\)](#)

Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



Happy Birthday Blessed Mother!

WHY DO WE CELEBRATE OUR LADY'S BIRTHDAY?

Our Lady was chosen by God to be the mother of His Son, and it is fitting that we honour her too for her obedience to God's will and for her unwavering faith and trust in God. When we honour Mary and try to imitate her in our own lives, we become closer to Jesus. Our Lady never looks for attention for herself, but always points to her Son. As the Mother of God, and our Heavenly Mother, why would we not want to celebrate her birthday! Very little is known about Our Lady's birth. We know that her parents were Joachim and Ann, as we believe that Our Lady was conceived without Original Sin, which is what we celebrate on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th (9 months before September 8th!)

The feast of the Nativity of the blessed Virgin Mary began to be celebrated as far back as the fifth century. How will you celebrate it today?



NEVER BE AFRAID OF LOVING THE BLESSED VIRGIN TOO MUCH. YOU CAN NEVER LOVE HER MORE THAN JESUS DID.
- ST MAXIMILIAN KOLBE -

SUGGESTIONS FOR CELEBRATING OUR LADY'S BIRTHDAY

- **Pray for Our Lady's Intentions**
- **Dress in blue**
- **Bake a cake**
Share it with your friends or family
- **Pray a rosary (or a decade) today**
- **Read about a Marian Apparition**
Check out Knock, Fatima, Lourdes or Guadalupe to get you started!
- **Visit your local church**
Spend some time praying to Jesus (our Lady loves when you spend time with her Son!)
- **Buy some flowers**
Bring them to a statue of Our Lady, or give them to someone you know would really appreciate a gift at this time
- **Wear a miraculous medal**
- **Go on pilgrimage**
Even to the statue of Our Lady in your local church, or to a grotto



- **Light a candle in honour of Our Lady.**

- **Pray a Mother Teresa Novena**

(usually a novena takes nine days, but Mother Teresa often prayed nine Memorare prayers in a row when she was in urgent need!)

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto you, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to you do I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen

- **Consecrate yourself to Our Lady**

Mother I am yours, now and forever. Through you and with you, I want to belong always and completely to Jesus. Amen

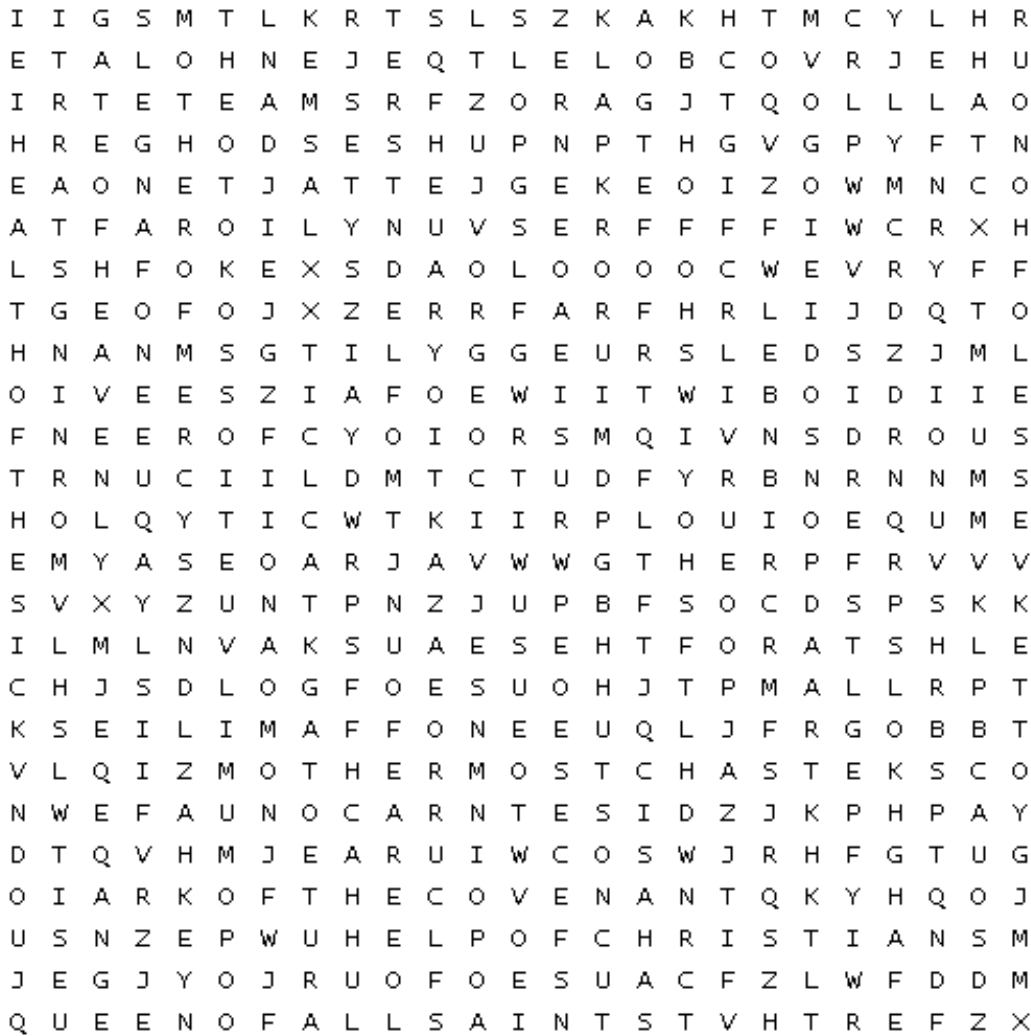
- **Start a new family tradition!**

- **Learn about Our Lady:**

Watch this Busted Halo video explaining Catholic Devotion to the Virgin Mary



Titles of Mary



Research:

- What is meant by "Theotokos"?
- Why is Our Lady known as "Undoer of Knots"?

Can you Find all these titles For Mary in the wordsearch?

- Ark of the Covenant
- Cause of our Joy
- Gate of Heaven
- Health of the Sick
- Help of Christians
- House of Gold
- Mirror of Justice
- Morning Star
- Mother most chaste
- Mother most pure
- Mother of Good Counsel
- Mother of Mercy
- Mystical Rose
- Queen of all Saints
- Queen of Angels
- Queen of Families
- Refuge of Sinners
- Seat of Wisdom
- Solace of Migrants
- Spiritual Vessel
- Star of the Sea
- Theotokos
- Tower of Ivory
- Undoer of Knots
- Vessel of Honour

