

**SUNDAY REFLECTIONS – 23rd SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME Year B**  
**9th SEPTEMBER 2018**



**GOSPEL: MARK 7:31:37**

Returning from the territory of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the Lake of Galilee, right through the Decapolis territory. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him.

He took him aside to be by themselves, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed, and he said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and at once the impediment of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they proclaimed it.

Their admiration was unbounded, and they said, 'Everything he does is good, he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

**LAUDATO SI # 65**

*Each human life is not adrift in the midst of hopeless chaos ... The Creator can say to each one of us: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you"*



**REFLECTION:** The readings this week resound with good news. The deaf are made to hear, the blind are restored to sight and the lame spring forth into celebratory dance! It paints a scene that stands in stark contrast to the images and news that pervade us daily.

Like the deaf man in today's Gospel we can often be left stuttering; lost for the words that somehow make sense of, or stem the flow of the human and natural disasters imploding around us. For me, there is a sense that the droughts, floods, earthquakes and fires seem almost apocalyptic. This is something which has caused me great inner turmoil. In the midst of this devastation how am I called to 'Be opened'?

Rather than a single laying on of hands I see that my 'Ephphatha' moment has been part of an ongoing recognition of the 'kin'dom' of God being evident in all of God's creation. This has opened my ears to a new way of hearing the 'Good News'. Everything has become connected in the Creator's divine web of life.

Thus, my call to hope in the midst of the dramas we are living these days has been to look to the wisdom of the universe, the deep truths of our religious traditions and the optimism of the Christian paschal mystery. James Conlon outlines this magnificently in his book 'From the Stars to the Streets'. Like him, I envisage a time when the earth will resurge with integrity, beauty, compassion, care for all life and a deep sense of kin'ship among all human beings and with the entire biotic community.

It is from this place of hope that I am called to act as co-creator of a different future. It is from this place of hope I am called to speak.

*Thus says the Lord: Say to those who are frightened: Be strong, fear not!  
Here is your God he comes....with divine recompense: He comes to save you!*



## SEASON OF CREATION 2018 WEEK 2



### Message from Pope Francis on the World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation (1<sup>st</sup> September 2018)

On this *World Day of Prayer* I would like to draw attention to the question of WATER. It is a very simple and precious element, yet access to it is sadly for many people, difficult if not impossible. "Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival." (LS 30)

In considering the fundamental role of water in creation and in human development, I feel the need to give thanks to God for 'Sister Water, simple and useful for life like nothing else on our planet. For this reason, care for water sources and water basins is an urgent imperative. (LS 36)

[https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2018/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180901\\_messaggio-giornata-cura-creato.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180901_messaggio-giornata-cura-creato.html)

### EMERGING WISDOM

*Many of us find a sense of mystery, wonder and transcendence in our experience of the natural world; looking up at the Milky Way through clear skies and pondering the unthinkable size and wonder of our galaxy and its part in the universe; walking in a rain forest and being caught up in amazement at the extravagant exuberance of so many forms of life.*

*Human spirituality and human aesthetics are nurtured by experiences of nature. They have always been available, even when we have failed to attend to them. What is new is the sense that we form one global community of human beings beyond all barriers of race and class and nation, that we need each other, and that we are deeply interconnected with all the other creatures. Planetary spirituality involves not only a real receptivity and respect for the natural world, but a deep sense of global solidarity, and a radical, life-long commitment to act for the good of the whole Earth community.*

**DENIS EDWARDS – Planetary Spirituality: Exploring a Christian Ecological Approach**



### PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL: Response:

#### Listen to your people, O God.

- ✚ For forgiveness and conversion of mind and heart of those who are blind to the needs of the poor and deaf to the cries of the oppressed, **we pray:**
- ✚ For healing and protection for our earth and its natural resources: that there will be an end to all practices that endanger animals and their natural habitats and greater sensitivity towards creatures great and small, **we pray:**
- ✚ For farmers and migrant workers and all who work the land that the difficulties they face on the land be appreciated, **we pray:**
- ✚ For children held in detention centres on Manus Island and Nauru that our government will show compassion and bring them to Australia, **we pray:.**

### Knowing Us Perfectly – In Silent Awe

Holy Spirit-Power around us and within us,  
knowing us and our past perfectly,  
having a dream for us we can't really imagine:  
we are in awe of your creation as it lies before our eyes,  
a living and elegant world  
wherein we each find ourselves conscious and alive,  
linked to others of our kind by bonds of love and memory,  
in awe of your creative presence and caringness.  
What shall we do to respond to this revelation?  
Inept seem all our efforts at speech:  
so sometimes we are silent.  
You are God, the Sea of Being in which we live and move.  
Alleluia.  
Blessed be your incomprehensible name.  
Amen.

*Prayers to an Evolutionary God – William Cleary*



## SEASON OF CREATION 2018

