

February 14, 2025

Daily Reflections



BE OPENED!

By Sr. Jane DeLisle, CSJ

An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

*Jesus left the district of Tyre
and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee,
into the district of the Decapolis.
And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment
and begged him to lay his hand on him.
He took him off by himself away from the crowd.
He put his finger into the man's ears
and, spitting, touched his tongue;
then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him,
"Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!")
And immediately the man's ears were opened,
his speech impediment was removed,
and he spoke plainly.*

MARK 7:31-35

Reflection

When I was a child and did not want to hear what one of my siblings was saying, I would close my eyes, block my ears with my hands, and sing “La, La, La!” (I remember doing this during a scary movie once. No one around me was happy.) There are times as an adult living in a highly conflicted society that I may be tempted to employ this defense mechanism. Of course, my reason tells me that this is inappropriate behavior.

Hearing and being open to what another or God has to say is essential and often leads me to personal transformation. There are times when my heart and mind need to pause and **ask for the grace of being open to another person** and their insights and needs.

There are countless opportunities to be open to people, life, ways of doing things, of celebrating holidays, styles of learning and teaching. In the end, I am called to be open to God’s abiding presence. This is true when offering kindness or a service, or encountering opinions and preferences. I feel challenged to listen to the perspective of those around me and reframe their assessment as constructive criticism. What can I learn from this remark or opinion?

Sometimes remarks challenge me. I realize there is a process to being open to the voice of another person. My first response may be to see fault with those offering their opinion. Once I get past my surprise and my bruised ego, I can think more clearly and try to learn from the comments, rather than taking their words as a personal attack.

A willingness to value other people and their thinking enables me to glean wisdom from what is said. I have a choice to resist or to be open to the ideas and insights of others. When in a reflective place, I more easily step aside from my critical ego. Only then can I listen and learn from the criticism, stretch myself and be responsive. If a message is worth giving and receiving, then creativity opens the way to respond in a positive manner. The grace to be open to new ideas allows for greater potential in both the giver and the receiver of constructive criticism.



Person's Left Hand
Photo by Victor Freitas

For Pondering

- What within my mind, heart, and soul needs healing?
 - To what or to whom am I invited to be **Open**?
 - What are forms that openness has taken in my life?
 - What are the benefits of being open and responsive to another's insights?
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For Prayer

*In all humility, I come to you, my God,
and ask for perspective and healing of my hurt pride.
I seek to hear the remarks and insights of others as wisdom
rather than taking criticism personally.
Give me the courage to change, adapt, and respond to the needs before me.
May my heart, ears, and mind be open to each transforming opportunity.
I am grateful that you have made us to live and work within community.
It is here that we might learn from one another.
Open me to new possibilities and refreshing change.
Amen.*

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

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