

## Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Feb 9th 2024

### “Ephphatha!”

The deaf and mute man in today's Gospel is a symbol of humanity in general. Since he doesn't listen to sounds and doesn't hear words, he doesn't learn how to make sounds and words either. People are deaf to the Word of God; they can't understand, comprehend, or accept it and therefore, they are unable to communicate the voice of God.

“Ephphatha! ” Jesus commands. “Open up!” We have a closed man, and Jesus commands him to, “Open up.” His ears open, and the knot of the tongue is untied.

The thought of him having his tongue knotted is almost ridiculous. Jesus’ word lets it go. Today, as part of the complete rite of adult baptism, this rite is still celebrated. The priest touches the ears and mouths of the baptised after the other symbolic gestures like the anointing, the robe, and the light, saying: 'May the Lord Jesus who makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak, grant you to hear his Word soon, and proclaim your faith to God's glory.'

This deaf-mute man becomes the prototype of the catechumen, the one who attends the catechism in preparation to receive baptism, being open to listening to the Word and being open to announcing his faith. We want the Lord to continue to whisper this command into our ears, “Ephphatha”, that we become open to his Word and profess our faith through our words and deeds.

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