



Things to Ponder

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23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Parish Family,

The average parish office receives numerous requests for help throughout the year. Even when the immediate need for assistance is met, there is usually a deeper longing that cannot be ignored. The humiliation and insecurity caused by being forced to ask for help often leads to feelings of resentment and profound fear. The man who could not talk or hear in today's gospel (Mark 7:31-37) was thereby denied genuine human interaction. Jesus did not hesitate to touch him and utter from the depths of his heart the word *Ephphatha!* Immediately, he was *opened*; he was *healed!* This word is also used when we baptize infants. It is a reminder that the effect of baptism is to free us from sin and fear and to open us to encounter Christ in a myriad of ways. One prime means of such an encounter is through those who are needy. Today, as we prepare for the pastoral visit of His Holiness, Pope Francis, we are asked to consider very practical ways in which we are being called to *be* Christ for others. We can commit to **pray, serve, or act**. All these resolutions will be collected and presented to the Pope when he visits. They represent our many ways of bringing the **joy of the gospel** to our desperate world!

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Bill Foley

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