**Twenty-second Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle B, 2015**

August 29/30, 2015

Dt 4: 1-2, 6-8; James 1: 17-18, 21b-22, 27; Mk 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23

These reading bring to my mind something very dear to my heart, and central to my spirituality, indeed to the spirituality of all deacons and all Christians, and it is this: That God speaks. God speaks his Word and we are to accept what he says in faith.

God speaks. This is the first thing we learn about God in the Bible. In the Book of Genesis what do we read? “And God said…. Let there be light!” God spoke and something beautiful happens and some new creation occurs.

Yes God speaks his Word and we are to believe what he says. We must hear God speak to us. We must hear God’s Word preached and taught in the Church, in the community, and then act on it, do something beautiful with it.

The Word which God speaks has created everything that exists. All things were created by the Word of God as the Scriptures tell us. And the Word of God is Jesus Christ.

God’s Word is something that St. Paul over and over says we must first hear with our ears and then believe with our hearts. We must listen, believe and then act. No one should say, “I cannot believe that God is telling me in the Scriptures, or in the homily, or in the teachings of the Church!” because each time God speaks his Word he also gives us the ability to believe. Each time he speaks his Word, he gives us the gift of faith which enables us to believe what he says. Hearing and believing always go hand in hand.

Each and every time we listen to the Word of God spoken or preached, God extends to us the gift of faith, the ability to believe and to see his presence in our lives. The more we listen and believe, the more we become like Jesus who is the Word of God who makes all things; Jesus who always is hearing his Father and carrying out the Father’s will. The more we hear what God says to us, the more compelled we feel to speak out and tell others what we have heard, what God has done for us.

Our faith in God, a faith which first comes to us by listening to God’s Word proclaimed in the community of the Church, is a faith that always wants to be expressed and shared with others. Just think of all the times in the Gospel when Jesus heals someone and then tells them not to say anything to anyone. What happened? The person can’t help himself. He has to speak; he has to tell others what had happened to him. God speaks his Word to us and we must share it with others. When we hear the Word of God proclaimed in the readings at Mass and in the homily, or when we read the Scriptures ourselves, or when we study the Catechism, what happens to us? We begin to change and become more like Jesus. More good things start coming out of us, not evil things that defile us like we heard in the Gospel. We end up loving God more and more, and the more we love God, the more we want to love other people.

The Scripture today tell us to listen, to hear, to believe, and then to live differently, live well, live fully, and to care for those in need, like the second Reading told us.

God is calling you; he wants you to proclaim to the entire world what you hear right here, right now, at this Eucharist, in your hearing of the Scriptures today, in the homily, and in this parish. God is calling you to tell others that Jesus is the Son of God and savior of the world. Listen to God’s Word, believe and then act.

None of us get a pass on this. We are called to bring a message of hope and joy to our world; the message that Jesus has redeemed us all by his life, death, and resurrection; that he came to bring us life, fullness of life, eternal life, and he will come on the last day to judge us on how well we have loved other, especially the poor.

How can we bring this message to others if we have not first heard God speak his Word? We must take time then for Sunday Mass each week. We must pray every day. We must open our hearts and empty them of all those evil things that we heard in the Gospel: adultery, theft, unchastity, envy, arrogance, greed, pride, and malice. We must open our hearts with prayer and the Eucharist so our hearts can be filled with good things that come from hearing and believing: honesty, fidelity, generosity, patience, hope, love, commitment, and perseverance.

Yes we must hear God’s Word. Each time God speaks his Word, he gives us the gift of faith, a gift what enables us to believe what he says. With this faith, we see God’s presence and his vision for the world. We see as God sees.

Then, after hearing the Word of God and accepting it in faith, we must go out of these four walls and tell others what Jesus Christ, the Word of God, has done for us, his people.

We cannot remain silent.