

Reaching out Through our Distinctive and Inclusive Story

Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love, Justice, Fortitude

Catholic Character Themes: Community, Compassion, Discipleship, Reverence, Solidarity, Stewardship

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning. As we begin our day, it is only fitting that we set our minds and hearts on Jesus and his Good News in prayer. It is Jesus, so often referred to as *teacher* in the Gospels, who models for us how we are to educate in the light of faith. It is Jesus who calls us through baptism to be co-workers in his labours for the Kingdom of his Father. It is Jesus who tells us *I am the way*, and invites us to be his hands, feet, ears and heart by our guiding, accompanying, listening and comforting presence in the lives of those entrusted to our care. It is Jesus, who enjoins us to pray, saying *ask, and it shall be given, knock and the door shall be opened*.

Let us begin our day then with prayer:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

OPENING PRAYER:

God our Father, you sent your Son Jesus to spread the Good News of your Kingdom: a Kingdom of justice, of peace and of love. He sought out the lost and marginalized, and drew them back in to the heart of the community of believers. He opened the ears of those who longed to hear, the eyes of those who longed to see, the hearts and minds of those who longed for the freedom to love and understand. Grant that your Holy Spirit may inspire our reflections this day that we might strive to do the same. May our work today help bring forth a greater understanding and commitment to the needs of all whom we are called to serve. We make this prayer to You in Jesus' name.

Amen.

READING : (Mark 7, 31-37)

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis . They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is "Be opened." And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

(Pause)

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION: (Separate Sheet) *Build Bethlehem Everywhere* "Inclusivity" (p. 41-42) and "Fundamental Option for the Lost" (pp. 44-45)

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL:

Let us pray for the Church and its leaders. That by befriending and defending the weakest among us, all members of the Body of Christ might more fully discover their true identity in Christ. We pray to the Lord...

Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all people of good will throughout the world, that we might recognize the face of Jesus in all who suffer due to war, economic exploitation, disability or loneliness, and open our hearts and communities their needs. We pray to the Lord...

Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those in leadership positions in our institutions of Catholic education, that they might always give priority to the struggling students in their communities. We pray to the Lord...

Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all those who struggle to parent and educate children with special needs, that the care and support of their communities and schools might help sustain them in their labours. We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for ourselves. That today's presentations and discussions might make us more capable and compassionate educators who can reach out with the heart of Christ to all who seek our guidance and help. We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For our own intentions...We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Now, let us unite our prayers we have spoken and those in the silence of our hearts and unite them to the constant prayer of Jesus to the Father on our behalf, using the words he gave us.

Our Father...

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord God, as we look forward to this day, we ask you to send us the light of your Holy Spirit to open our minds and guide our hearts. By the power of your grace, may our actions today help strengthen the commitment of our school communities to your Son's Gospel, that they might always honour the needs of all whom you have called us to serve, and lead them to You. We make this prayer to you in Jesus' name.

And may almighty God bless us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen