



### **A message from Father Jacek...**

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday we heard the story about hearing and speaking (Mk 7:31-37). A deaf man who has an impediment in his speech is healed. Jesus says to him. “Be opened”. And that’s what happens. His ears are opened, his tongue released. We are told he then “speaks plainly” – the Greek word is “orthos” which literally means “rightly” or “correctly”. For a long time no one has been able to make out what he is saying when he speaks, but now he can tell it like it is. I wonder what he says – perhaps it’s his first chance to tell someone he loves them, or to thank someone who has cared for him.

All too often someone with hearing problems or a speech impediment can find themselves sidelined, ignored or treated as if they were stupid. Whatever he says, though, his life is transformed.

The story is important for us because we often think of ourselves as open, caring, tolerant people – and I’m sure we are. But I’m prepared to bet that there are still some people whose voices we fail to hear, people we dismiss as having nothing to say that’s worth hearing, people who we haven’t even noticed are trying to speak. We may be deaf to certain groups who seem different to us. We may miss the voices of the poor, or close our ears to the rich, assuming they know nothing about our struggles. We may write off those older than us as hopelessly out of date, or those younger than us as naïve. We talk over people, speaking for them

rather than letting them speak for themselves.

It's not just groups whose voices we miss though. Most of us can probably think of people we know whose voices we screen out and avoid. Perhaps we've fallen out with them and can't believe they have anything to say that we want to hear. It is bound to be loaded with their own agenda. We stick our fingers in our ears and turn away.

Perhaps this week we should pray that God helps us to "be opened" or be honest with ourselves and others. That we can hear and speak rightly/responsibly. Since we remember that the first description of love in the first Letter of Paul to the Corinthians chapter 13 is? .....love is Patient. If we want to experience life at its core we need to be patient with God, with others and with ourselves.

Why? Because we owed it to God, who is very patient with us and infinitely bigger and far more generous than we can imagine.

Amen

In Christ's peace,  
Father Jacek