

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

My sincere welcome back to all of our Labor Day holiday travelers. I hope you took the opportunity to recollect on the social and economic achievements of American wage earners, and to reflect that our inner and outer life depend on the labors of other men and women, living and dead. Considering what the Church teaches on the dignity of every human life, each person in this country deserves meaningful work as instruments of God's ongoing creation.

For those people who were able to attend my installation as the fifth pastor of St. Joseph the Worker, we received the honor of Bishop Stika's presence and tribute. Although today I had hoped to share my own reflections on this Sunday's readings, our good Bishop will be broadcasting his comments on the Pennsylvania child abuse reports. No words can ever redress the harm caused by certain clergy to the innocents; hopefully we can all take some solace knowing that justice and true cleansing will come to the Church. I have been praying daily for all the victims of these abuses and for justice to perpetrators.

Within the heart of today's readings is an invitation for us to become humble instruments of healing in Jesus' hands. Isaiah offers us the possibility for greater faith in our God's saving might, particularly addressing the afflicted. He encourages them not to be frightened, but "Be strong, and fear not!" for our God is here. We are reminded how God's eyes are constantly focused on "... *the blind, the deaf, the lame, the mute,*" so that even "*the tongue of the mute will sing.*" St. James rouses us also in the Second Reading, entreating that if we are to have favorites, they should be the poor, voiceless, afflicted, and vulnerable of the society, especially anyone who has not met Christ!

As a tribute to His heavenly Father, Jesus in today's Gospel fulfills Isaiah's prophecy by healing a deaf and mute man. Salvation history began to unfold in Deuteronomy when we read 'Hear O Israel, The Lord is our God, the Lord is One.' Through this miracle of the recovery of this man's hearing, we too are summoned to contemplate our own deafness, unblock our ears, and deliberately quiet our tongue. As we also crave Jesus' healing touch, we can invite Jesus to give us His heart so that he may touch the lives of people we encounter throughout our daily walk. Recall how gently Jesus touched the lives of millions through saintly souls like Francis of Assisi, Damien of Molokai, Vincent de Paul, and Blessed Mother Teresa.

"Jesus loves hidden souls. I must strive to make the interior of my soul a resting place for the Heart of Jesus." — St. Mother Teresa

Happy Sunday!