



*And [immediately] the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly.*

MARK 7:35

JACOB\_09 / SHUTTERSTOCK

## He Has Done All Things Well

**D**eep in the heart of each of us is a desire for a perfect world—a world of peace and harmony, where life flourishes and people care for one another. From beginning to end, our religious tradition promises that such a world is just ahead of us. Today's readings assure us that physical obstacles will not prevent its accomplishment, because the graciousness of God is stronger than any other power.

Today's reading from Isaiah instructs us: "Be strong, do not fear!" (35:4). It encourages us to believe in this promise of ultimate fulfillment and to trust that God will see it through. Our focus changes slightly in the Gospel passage. What was a promise of the future for Isaiah bursts forth as a reality in the Gospel, where the healing of broken bodies and troubled lives is realized by the warm words and gentle touch of Jesus.

Do such miracles really happen? Or are these fanciful stories that provide hope for people with little scientific understanding? Are miracles real? Of course they are. However, their true meaning might be much more profound than we realize. A miracle is a manifestation of divine power far beyond human control or comprehension. It is an experience of being made whole again, an occurrence in which peace and harmony are reestablished. Sometimes a miracle is spectacular; at other times it is far too deep to be seen. But always it is God working in our lives to create us anew.

*Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA*

### FOR *Reflection*

- ★ *Where does your life need healing? What are you doing about it?*
- ★ *How might you be a source of healing in the lives of others?*

# Dear Padre,

**Martyrs and people who commit suicide willingly sacrifice their lives, so how are they different? If I deliberately put myself in a position to be killed—even for a worthy cause—isn't that a form of suicide?**

**L**ife is a gift from God. While both martyrdom and suicide contradict the natural human disposition to preserve and perpetuate life, the former is a totally self-giving act; the latter, a self-inflicted one.

The early Church believed that martyrs went directly to heaven because their sacrifice of life was the ultimate Christlike expression. Their courageous endurance of indignities and tortures—their heroic willingness to die in defense of the faith or to save another's life—demonstrates a supreme love of God and neighbor over love for life itself (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2473).

Those who take their own lives to end personal suffering or despair make a decision that belongs to God alone. It's an action that can revolve totally around the "self," often with little thought given to its consequences. It's a sin against hope (CCC 2091) that reveals a lack of faith and trust in God.

Conversely, martyrdom is a profound expression of faith, trust, and hope in God. Nevertheless, our compassionate God fully knows the intensity of suffering that triggers suicide and "can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance" (CCC 2283).

*Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org*

**Do you have a question for the Padre?**

Go to [DearPadre.org](http://DearPadre.org) to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



## A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*Remember that story about the poor widow lady...Her husband had committed suicide; he jumped from the bridge into the river. And she wept. She said, "I am a sinner, a poor woman. But my poor husband! He is in hell."...And the Curé of Ars said, "But wait a moment, ma'am, because between the bridge and the river, there is the mercy of God."*

HOMILY, MARCH 18, 2019

## Calendar

### Monday

SEPTEMBER 6

Weekday

Col 1:24—2:3

Lk 6:6—11

### Tuesday

SEPTEMBER 7

Weekday

Col 2:6—15

Lk 6:12—19

### Wednesday

SEPTEMBER 8

*The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Mi 5:1—4a or

Rom 8:28—30

Mt 1:1—16, 18—23, or  
1:18—23

### Thursday

SEPTEMBER 9

*St. Peter Claver,  
Priest*

Col 3:12—17

Lk 6:27—38

### Friday

SEPTEMBER 10

Weekday

1 Tm 1:1—2, 12—14

Lk 6:39—42

### Saturday

SEPTEMBER 11

Weekday

1 Tm 1:15—17

Lk 6:43—49

### Sunday

SEPTEMBER 12

*Twenty-fourth*

*Sunday in*

*Ordinary Time*

Is 50:4c—9a

Jas 2:14—18

Mk 8:27—35