

MEDITATION

Ok...In a minute, I'd like everyone to close their ears and pay attention for 30 seconds...

you can either keep your fingers put your fingers inside or, and I would advise this if you have fingernails, you can put them on the outside ...
which ever you prefer...

I went around the Center the other day and asked people to do just this.
They were laughing, curious yet cautious and still they obliged my request!
ok, ready? close your ears...and pay attention
Don't worry...I'll keep time....

What happened to the sounds around you?
What did you notice?... your heart beating? your breath?
your thoughts?
like.....ok...this is dumb...where is she going with this???

Those were some of the answers that I got the other day...
what were some of your noticings?????

So this is why I offered this seemingly silly invitation....

In our reading today, the people brought to Jesus a deaf man who also had a speech impediment and they begged him to lay his hands on him...to heal him.

This man must have been much loved, which is curious,
because most people who had such serious illnesses were shunned and ostracized, because sin was considered to be the cause of most illness and defects...

Be that as it may,
Jesus takes this man away from the crowd
and sticks his fingers in the man's ears..
and then Jesus spits on his own fingers and touches the man's tongue...
One of the beautiful traits of Mark's Gospel is its physicality...
Mark doesn't make Jesus 'pretty' ...he makes him real....

Now, we could take this healing on it's superficial literal level...
we could say: Wow! wasn't Jesus great!
and then we could wonder, why such healings don't happen these days...
to our loved ones, friends or ourselves...

But of course, there is always a different,
deeper way to look at this man's healing...
one that certainly still continues today,
and that is what I would like to reflect upon this afternoon...

When we stuck our fingers into our ears, just about everyone said,
outside noises were muffled, less clear.
Our connection to the world around us was diminished...
we were encouraged, perhaps, to notice, to pay attention to what was going
on inside of us: our heartbeat, our breath, our thoughts...

This was Jesus's intent, the scholar's say...
When Jesus stuck his fingers into the man's ears, he was in effect,
reversing the man's flow of attention, as theologian Jack Shea puts it.
Ears pick up the sounds from outside of us...
Jesus wanted the man to hear the whispers from deep within...

Now...Jesus takes his own spit and placed it on the man's tongue.

**Spit and saliva are forms of our bodily water,
All water, even our bodily water
has long been understood to symbolize the Spirit.
By joining his spit with the man's saliva,
there was a physical co-mingling of their spirits...
Jesus and the man are now connected spiritually
and the man's tongue was released.**

Now for the third part of this healing...

**While it is true that our tongues form the letters of what we wish to say
and our ears bring in the sounds of our world around us,
it is also true that it is our heart which interprets the sounds we hear...
and it is our heart that forms the desires about which we speak...**

**So when Jesus looked to heaven
he connected the two of them to the Holy One...
This in and out, up and down intertwining of spit and spirit,
weaves a connection to between the man, Jesus and Yahweh...**

**And then Jesus utters the command:
Ephphatat! Be open...**

**Physical healings are wonderful and amazing and life giving
And according to the Scriptures, Jesus performed countless
physical healings in his 3 years of public ministry...**

**but the opening and healing of the human heart is the most spectacular, the most powerful,
and the most profound miracle of all...**

**Because when a person's heart is open,
he hears lovingly...whether he is able to do with his ears or not...
Because when a person's heart is open,
she speaks kindly...whether she is able to do so with her tongue or not**

Isn't this so, so true?

**If /when we close our hearts,
no matter how well we hear the sounds of the world
we cannot perceive the beauty of what we hear...
Remember briefly about all those times you have been stewing
in anger, resentment or jealousy...
when we are steeped in those feelings,
it is so hard to hear the beauty of birdsong,
the joy of children
or the sweet tenderness of loving words....**

**If/when we close our hearts
no matter how articulate and correct our grammar and enunciation is ...
we cannot speak of the beauty and the ultimate truth
of what we know deep down...**

and just the opposite is true as well:

**The heart that is open can always communicate Beauty and truth
in any number of ways....**

**The heart that is open can perceive Beauty and Truth in
a myriad of ways...**

An open, loving heart is the essence of a life well lived....

**an open, loving heart can be heard amidst of the din and stresses of life
when we focus our attention inward,
when we listen for the still small voice,
and we are willing to stop and become aware...**

We must take the time:

**maybe go for a bike ride on a beautiful fall afternoon,
have cup of tea looking at your own backyard....
perhaps you would come and walk the labyrinth...
perhaps it could be as simple of noticing your breath as you wait in the grocery line... get
creative!**

**Just do something even if that means putting your fingers in your ears
so that you will be able hear the heartbeats of Love....**

**Because when we become aware of that mysterious, amazing abundant presence of Love,
we can only utter two words: Thank you. Amen.**