

September 6, 2009  
23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Isaiah 35: 4 – 7a  
James 2: 1 – 5  
Mark 7: 31 – 37

By its very nature, Scripture strengthens and comforts those who read and pray on it. Christ also offers strength and comfort to us, if we can take the time to listen to The Holy Spirit in prayer. In Isaiah 35: verse 4 – the immortal line of “Be strong, fear not” is an ever present theme throughout all of Scripture. Google “fear not” and see the many references.

Then after “Fear Not” is some form of message like Peace be with you, grace and mercy or love. Then there is this “Ah-Ha” moment, when you are different and enlightened because your eyes and ears were opened (v 5). It just takes one word from Jesus – “*Ephphatha – be Opened*” (Mk 7:34) from today’s Gospel. Now the hard work of living this new life begins in earnest. The challenging part is our now saying “Peace be with you” and “Fear Not” and really meaning it. Returning the same favor that God has bestowed in us - to those who need it most - has always been the objective of Catholic Social Justice.

178

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