

Saint Thomas of the Air Church
Trinity XII
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rmcneely+

ephphatha . . . be opened

Ephphatha, the Aramaic word spoken by Jesus as He healed deafness and muteness.

Be Opened.

Today, St Paul writes to the church he founded in Corinth and explains that the New Covenant is superior to the Old One.

Paul recognizes the value and importance of the Old Covenant
As a transitory means by which we reach
The New Covenant.

He recalls the promise to Abraham
manifested in the stone tablets
containing the 10 Commandments
given to Moses.

The laws carved in stone that guide us still today
But were only words that defined behavior
And like all laws, they delineated right from wrong,
But do not have the power to bring about obedience.

Paul recalls the Exodus account of Moses returning from Mt. Sinai
So radiating the glory of God
That he was painful to look upon
And the Jews demanded that he be veiled
To block the glory of God.

The Children of God even installed a huge veil in the Temple
To separate themselves from the Holy of Holies

That sacred portion of the Temple containing the arch.
 Was the Temple veil a remnant of the veil of Moses?
 which separates His people from God?

Recall that at the instant Jesus died on the cross at Calvary
 That huge veil hanging in the Temple
 Was torn in two.
 The veil that separated the people of God
 from God
 Was no more.

Does that veil exist today?

Has it blocked our hearing
 And stifled our speech?
 Have we become the deaf and mute man from today's Gospel?

Has the modern movement to secularize our Society
 Made us deaf
 To the word of God,
 To the sound of His voice
 To the message of His Love?

Have we, in the guise of "tolerance"
 Had our voice removed
 And lost the ability to freely speak the word of God?

Has the removal of God from public spaces
 From the halls of government, from the courts
 From schools
 From polite conversation

Woven a new veil
 Covering the truth
 The Love of God

Because they cannot bear the glory
The edifying light;
The reflection of God in our lives.
Without that love shining brightly in our lives
In our society
In our world

What has happened?
Without the Love of God
What is free to infect us
What is loose in our world
What overcomes us?

What is behind the unrest
The civil and
Criminal distress so prevalent in the news of the day?

What has inflamed the hearts of many
And incited some to violence?
How has violence and crime,
Wanton destruction of public and private property
become condoned as a Constitutional right and
a form of legitimate protest?

What has deafened us to God's message?
What has muffled our speech
and ability to freely communicate
His gospel, the good news of His mercy?
What is the source of our reluctance?

Is it that veil,
Covering the reflected countenance of God in our lives?
That veil separating us from the love of God?
That has loosed hatred among us?

Has the veil been woven so tightly that our Bishops
 Must remind us of the words we pray at every mass
 Remind us of the Commandments of Jesus
 Love one another as I have loved you?

Once God's love is removed from our lives
 The vacuum draws hatred, and
 Ignorance and hatred have bred fear and anger.
 Hatred focused upon one part of us
 Only breeds hatred against the other.
 And so the cycle continues.
 Violence begets counter violence
 We become divided when we lose sight of God.

When we can no longer hear the word of God,
 When we can no longer speak the word of God,
 When we can no longer spread the Love of God,
 When that veil blocks our hearing
 and garbles our speech,
 The devil has scored his win.

In St Mark's account of Jesus healing the deaf and mute man,
 Jesus quietly and privately opens the man to the world
 He looks to Heaven, His Father and He says:
 "Ephphatha" . . . Be opened.

He "unstops" his ears,
 And lets loose the string that garbled the man's speech.
 With a single word; Jesus
 Removes the veil from the man's life.
 Restores him to the world
 Returns him to a life with sound
 To hear the word of God

And to speak the word of God.

He will do the same for us.

We must go to Him in prayer

Prayer such as today's ancient Collect.

Seeking the abundant mercy of God

The good things of which we are not worthy to ask.

Forgiveness for that which our conscience is afraid.

Seeking more than we deserve.

Seeking the removal of the veil from our lives.

Seeking the restoration of God's love to the world.

That love will work wonders.

In our lives

In the lives of our Countrymen and women

And in the lives of the world.

Love is the only antidote to hate.

Jesus showed us how it is done.

Even as he hung bleeding in agony on the cross

As His strength was leaving Him

With one of His last breaths

He sought forgiveness for His torturers.

Not vengeance,

Not violence

Not anger or hatred

Christian love.

Let us all be opened to Him
Let Him in.
Let Him into our lives
Into our hearts.

Eph pha tha. Be Opened.