

**Homily – Installation of Fr. Munoz, Blessed Sacrament Church
September 9, 2018**

God’s words to his people today are clear and comforting: “Be strong. Fear not!” There are times when we cannot see the way we are to walk on our pilgrim way. God responds: “The eyes of the blind will be opened!” There are times when we cannot hear what others are trying to tell us, or even what God is saying to us. God answers: “The ears of the deaf will be cleared!” There are times when we seem to be paralyzed, unable to move forward or take action. God says: “The lame will leap like a deer!” There are times when we stand speechless in face of a difficult situation. God promises: “The tongue of the mute will sing!”

We may well ask God in return: when will you do these wonderful things? When will you turn things around for us – as individuals, as a community of faith? When will we be healed? We live in difficult times. There is so much divisiveness, polarization, and chaos around us – in our nation, in the world, in our Church! When will you intervene and set things right, Lord? When?!!!

Today Jesus comes to a foreign territory. He has crossed a border into unfamiliar surroundings. People bring him a deaf man

with a speech impediment. Jesus quietly takes him aside. He gently touches the man, groans to his heavenly Father with deep feeling for the man's suffering, and heals him. Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus. The onlookers exclaim: "He has done all things well."

The Church is called and sent to continue Jesus' mission and ministry – of proclaiming the gospel of God's love, reconciling those who are alienated, setting things right by working for justice, making peace in a world torn about by lies, greed, oppression, violence. The risen Lord has given the Holy Spirit to each member of Christ's Body in baptism and confirmation. We are empowered to continue Jesus' work. But we are human. All of us are sinners. As disciples and as a community of faith we are in constant need of repentance, conversion, reform, and renewal. That includes us bishops and priests as we so painfully have learned again in recent weeks.

The Letter of James tells us that we are to show no partiality in our healing ministry and welcome. This is a time for expressing gratitude to two groups that many Catholics, including clergy, might consider "enemies." Both have contributed to our encounter with realities we would rather not face or have to deal with. The media have been consistent in uncovering uncomfortable truths about the

Church, clergy, and bishops. We need to face the truth and be grateful to those who help us ascertain the truth. Moreover, the victims of sexual abuse, who have suffered often for decades, now have the courage to stand up and speak truth to those in power, show the bad effects of clericalism, and call us to our common responsibility to bring healing to all who have suffered abuse.

God will work through us as he did through Jesus to bring light to the blind, hearing to the deaf, mobility to the lame, and song to those who cannot find the words to express themselves. Let us ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to allow God to work through us in the world and the Church today. *Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!*