

# 23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

September 6, 2009

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY  
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA  
Rev. Jeff McGowan

## 1<sup>ST</sup> READING: ISAIAH 35:4-7

Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not!

## PSALM 146

The Lord gives sight to the blind; the Lord raises up those who were bowed down.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> READING: JAMES 2:1-5

My brothers and sisters, show no partiality.

## GOSPEL: MARK 7: 31-37

"He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

+++++

A blind man was being led down the street by a guide dog. When they came to the corner of a busy intersection, the dog crossed against the light. The blind man had no choice but to follow. Cars swerved to avoid them; drivers honked their horns and swore loudly. Somehow the two reached the other side unharmed. As they stopped on the other corner, the blind man reached inside his pocket, pulled out a dog biscuit, and offered it to the reckless canine. Having just watched as they crossed, a bystander tapped the blind man on the shoulder and said, "Sir, that dog almost got you killed. The last thing you should do is reward him with a dog biscuit." The blind man smiled and said, "I'm not giving him a reward. I'm trying to find his mouth so I can kick him in the other end."

Our first reading tells us to "say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not!" Whenever we find ourselves moaning about some adversity, we need to remember that blind man. We need to give that negative anxiety a swift kick in the rear. Forget about the self pity, "pick up your mat and walk," trash the excuses. Do something positive. Only Tim Tebow and the Florida Gators can wheel young Boomer Hornbeck through the locker rooms and autograph his football. But we can do something positive. We can make our favorite dish and take it to someone who is going through a rough time. We can volunteer for a

good cause. If we can't go on a medical mission to Haiti, we can make a donation. If we can't go to Afghanistan and hug a soldier, we can knit a blanket. If we don't cook or knit, we can spend some time in the Blessed Sacrament chapel and pray for those who are far less fortunate than we are. My friends, the fastest way out of dullness is active engagement in good work. It's not about miracles but about taking care of our neighbors in day to day life.

Christians don't belong under the weather; we belong on top of the world. We don't need to be the Savior of the world or carry the world's burdens on our shoulders; Jesus is with us. We don't need to judge others; we have a merciful God to do that. We can make a difference, though. We can determine that life is good. We can decide that challenges are our opportunities to remember who we are, what we are about and where we are going. Be strong, fear not; no matter how dreadful the storm may be, we will be fine when it passes. Life with Jesus is Good News everyday, in every way.