

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time September 5, 2021

As I began to read the Gospel for this Sunday, two things immediately caught my attention. First, the route Jesus took towards the Sea of Galilee, was definitely out of his way. Second, who were the “They” who brought the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, to Jesus?

I don’t know how many of you have watched the series “the Chosen” online, but the creator, Dallas Jenkins, always has a creative story, a back story if you will, about how the people involved in a miracle or healing got there. Well, the back story in today’s scripture, is the “back roads” Jesus took by way of Sidon. Nothing Jesus ever did was accidental but always intentional. Perhaps Jesus went out of his way so “They” could bring the man in need of healing, to Jesus.

I think Jesus was looking for some peace and quiet and took the long way around to avoid the ever-present crowds. But, “they” found him and brought to him a man in need of healing. How wonderful to have such friends who bring you to Jesus. How wonderful to have such friends who trusted Jesus to heal their friend.

I have heard of people who do an “intervention” for a friend or loved one who is close to them. This intervention is intended to remove the person in question away from some form of unhealthy behavior. Think about that for a moment. Is this something you could do? I think for most of us, to be part of an intervention to alter a person’s unhealthy lifestyle would be something we could all do. But what about an intervention to alter a person’s unhealthy spiritual lifestyle? How many of us, myself included, have family members that no longer practice their faith? This is a difficult conversation to have with anyone but especially hard to talk about with our families.

Just like the friends in today’s Gospel, our mission is to bring others to Jesus. We are the “they” who encounter the broken, the hurting, the lonely, the poor among us. Do we have the courage to step out of our comfort zone and embrace those around us looking for Jesus? Do we truly believe that Jesus can heal them? May we too allow ourselves to be “astounded beyond measure” as the “they” were who saw their friend not only cured of his affliction but so completely restored to good health, the man spoke plainly. Yes, “He has done everything well” said the friends of the now cured man about Jesus. For all of us, there is no better life than life in Jesus! Prepare to be astounded!

Reflection by Julie de Gouw, Pastoral Minister

