

**POSSIBLE Prayer of the Church** 🕊️ **12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity, August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2026**

*Heavenly Father, we poor sinners beg of You this day to be merciful to us, to heal us and to all those in need for whom we pray this day. [Possible brief silence]*

O LORD, You gather us by the work of Your Spirit and dwell in our midst by Your Means of Grace for the sake of Your Son. Open our lips, O LORD, that our mouths may declare Your praise. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

LORD, bless these [two] congregations, that our ears would be opened by the Spirit to the Gospel of peace and salvation, and that our lips would show forth our thanks and praise. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Almighty God, bless all pastors and give them boldness to speak the truth in love and compassion, that they would not break the bruised reed, but rather lovingly care for all sinners in need of God's mercy. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Heavenly Father, bless all in authority by whose service You provide the gift of order, including parents and family, our government, our police and firemen, our military, and our schools. Give them strength and endurance to carry out their duties for the good of those entrusted to their care. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Merciful LORD, bless the sick, the frail and the dying [*including our brothers and sisters in Christ: **Our Savior & Faith Prayers***]. Restore them to health. We pray also for doctors, nurses, therapists and all who tend our brothers and sisters in need. Bless them as they put the talents You have given them to good use. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Gracious God, bless all who will partake this day of Christ's most precious body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar as our LORD Jesus puts Himself on our tongues. Give us discernment of His body, that we would come to His Table in humility and faith to receive the forgiveness of sins and salvation. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

LORD, as the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' glory, we cannot gaze on Your glory in Heaven unless Jesus takes our condemnation and gives us His righteousness. Receive our thanks for Christ's redeeming work, and grant that we may confess with our mouths that Jesus is LORD and believe in our hearts that You raised Him from the dead to save us. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

We entrust all these petitions to Your care, loving Father, confident in Your great mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our LORD, who is worshiped together with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**TRINITY-12 MARK 7:31-37** Ephphatha=Eph-pha-tha! **& HE SIGHED! 8.23.26 F.OS**

ALTERNATE OPENING PRAYER: *Dear Lord Jesus, You are our High Priest and our Healer. Through Your death and Resurrection You have given ears to hear to those who in their sinful condition were deaf to all things spiritual. This included me. Today we again hear Your Divine, "Ephphatha" in Your wonderful healing Gospel. May our ears, hearts and minds be opened that we gladly hear and receive Your Word. May the strings of our tongues also be loosed that we can speak boldly and clearly to others about the Message of Life and the way to You. Make our lives a reflection of Your love. You are our Blessed Savior. **Amen.***

SIGHING IS PART OF SIN Not only when people are physically tired, but especially when they are stressed out and mentally and emotionally tired, **we sigh**. Deep breath and exhale. We sigh when we're burdened by something, when we're weighed down, when we're struggling to keep on going. Sometimes the cause of our sighing is within us - be it the physical things we battle like bad knees and bad backs, disease, loss of sight and loss of hearing; or be it the sin within that weighs on you, that attacks your conscience, that makes you say, "*Why did I do or say that? Why am I such a mess?*" And we can be brought to sighing by things outside of us, too - when people do evil to us and the ones we love and make our life difficult, when family or friends let us down, when all our efforts get us nowhere, when we see the violence of the world and how everything around us seems to fail sooner or later. Sometimes it's all just too much, and we sigh; we groan. **Sighing is the fruit of the curse.**

JESUS SIGHS TOO As **we** look up to heaven **and sigh**, it is most helpful to see our LORD Jesus in the Gospel **doing the very same thing**. He is really one with us in our troubles. He shares our burdens. He too, sighs and groans. But His sighing is also different from ours. He feels your pain to be sure. And He knows your emptiness. But there's more to it than that. He knows that there's a cure. He has come to be the cure Himself. His sighs, His groans, His suffering are the very thing that take your sin and your burden from you. **His sighs breathe His words and His Spirit and His life into you.**

HIS FRIENDS GOT IT The **friends** of the deaf man at least in some small way understood this. **They brought the deaf-mute to Jesus**. They didn't just tell him that being "hearing challenged" made him "special." They didn't ignore his deafness or ostracize him. They didn't say it was his fault, that it was punishment for something he had done in the past. They were **true friends**. So they brought him to where he could get help. They brought Him **to Jesus**. [APPLICATION TO US:] May God grant **to us all** such friends, even as we have already been **befriended** by those who brought us to Jesus at **Baptism**, who encouraged us to come to **church** [or get back to church] or receive **Holy Communion**. And also by His mercy may the LORD make **us this kind of friends** to others.

HE HAD JESUS GOING 4 HIM Above all, though, even more than friends, the deaf-mute had **this going for him**: He had **Jesus going for him** - Jesus **with** him and **for** him and **at** and **on his side**. Jesus took him aside from the multitude, away from the familiarity and the security of his friends and the people he knew. The deaf-mute's attention, his trust was to be entirely focused on Jesus now. **So it is with you**. When Jesus deals with you, he calls you to find your security not ultimately in the familiar people or things in this world, but only in Him.

NOT A PR-STUNT Jesus did this away from the crowd. He wasn't using this man as a prop for a PR stunt to promote His Messianic career. He was completely there for the deaf-mute, one on one. He put His fingers into the deaf man's ears. There's a bit of **"sign language"**. He spit and touched the deaf man's tongue. He touched him right where his body was broken with a healing touch. And He said, "Eph-pha-tha." **"Be opened. Be released."** There was something almost **over the line** in Jesus' actions. We don't want people sticking their fingers in our ears. And we certainly don't want people spitting and touching our tongues! Jesus invaded this man's personal space. It was **uncomfortably close**.

WHY TONGUE/EARS/SPIT? **The LORD can heal with just a Word.** **WHY** then fingers in **the ears**, **spit** and **hands** upon the **tongue**? Well, for one thing, this is what his friends had prayed for. Remember they had begged Jesus to put His hand on him. That prayer was being answered **very concretely**. [May be a LESSON FOR US?] **"Be careful what you pray for."** You may receive what you asked, but **not in the way** you expected. It may **not** come in the comfortable, simple way you were hoping for **but in the LORD's way** that puts you out of your comfort zone, that teaches you **not** to trust in **your prayers** or your friends' prayers, but only in the LORD who answers your petitions. He may be invading **your** personal space, but it's for your good.

HIS REASON & PURPOSE **Jesus heals US in this "hands-on" way too**, because this is the very **purpose and reason** He came, **to be the Great Physician** who touches our broken flesh with His pure life-giving flesh. He sticks His fingers in our ears through the preaching of His Word. In the Bible, the **"finger of God"** is a reference to **the Holy Spirit and His work**. God puts **His finger, His Holy Spirit into our ears with the Scriptural Words which He Himself inspired**. Only by the power of God's Word and Spirit can our natural spiritual deafness be turned to a listening ear which understands and believes the things of God.

SACR'S: 1. **BAPTISM** Jesus also spits and touches our tongue **in the Sacraments**. Is not **Baptism** water and Words from the mouth of God? In Baptism Jesus says His **"Ephphatha"** to us, **releasing** us from our bondage to death and **unloosing** our tongues to sing the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. We pray in the **Psalms**, **"O LORD, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise."** Only when the Holy Spirit has opened our ears and freed our

tongues can we truly worship Him rightly. It is written, **"No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit."**

SACR'S: 2. **COMMUNION** And of course, our LORD Christ touches our tongue **very literally** in **Holy Communion**, where He places His own Body & Blood on our tongues and into our bodies for the forgiveness of our sins. To the world it is a rather strange thing that you would come forward and kneel at this rail and let someone else place food and drink into your mouth. But you do so at the LORD's Word. Because this is **the LORD's concrete, earthy way of touching you and giving you eternal healing**.

[AGAIN,] HE *SIGHED*. [Again,] **"Jesus looked up to Heaven, and SIGHED."** The cost of our healing is His sacrificial death, and Jesus knows that well. He sighed and groaned and cried out and was spitefully spit upon for us on the Cross. And yet through that death Jesus is not defeated but victorious. For in so doing He breaks the power of sin's curse. Jesus has overcome all that makes you sigh and groan in this fallen world through the Cross. **You have Victory in Him**.

RELEASE FROM TH'TOMB God the Father showed that Victory of Jesus' sacrifice for you on the Third Day. There God the Father said **"Ephphatha" to the tomb**, **"be opened,"** and raised Jesus to life in glory. **In the same way**, as the firstborn of the dead, Christ will speak, **"Ephphatha"** to your graves on the Last Day, and raise you from the dead with glorified bodies to live with him forever in righteousness and holiness.

LIGHT AT THE END OF... This is the **light at the end of all tunnels for the Christian**. It is the **ultimate "Opening Up,"** for us, our **"Ephphatha!"** This is the promise that no matter how bad the sighing gets, **there really is a better day ahead**. No matter how deaf God may appear to the sounds of your cries, in Jesus Christ, He hears, and He will answer you, and restore you, and give you eternal blessing. In the Resurrection there will be no more deafness or pain or trouble or disease any more. As it is written, **"Sorrow and sighing shall flee away."** The **whole creation** will rejoice with you as it too is released from its bondage. We eagerly wait for the Adoption, the Redemption of our bodies. **And until then**, the Spirit of Christ helps us in our weakness, aiding our prayers when we don't know what to say, making intercession for us with sighs and groans too deep for words.

CONCLUSION **"In that day the deaf will hear the Words of the Book."** Thanks be to God that He has caused the **living melody of the Gospel to sound** in our ears, that He sighs His breath and Spirit and life into us. Even in the midst of the uncertainties of your life, let your confession of faith be like that of the multitude in the Gospel, **"He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."** **IJ'N, Amen. SDG**