

JESUS IS THE HEALER

I did some research on today's Gospel — specially looking at the writings and thoughts of a priest named Fr. Tommy Lane.

Today's Gospel story from Mark has Jesus and his followers in the area of the Decapolis — which, in Greek, literally translates to Ten Cities. It was a federation of ten pagan cities within parts of Israel. Everything about the ten cities was Greek, including the way they were governed. Their worship even used the names of the Greek gods.

But when someone was suffering such as the deaf man in today's Gospel, they knew that their pagan culture did not satisfy the needs of this deaf man, so they sought out Jesus — He was seen as the only possible hope. All the glitter of the Greek culture didn't fulfill their deepest longing... only Jesus did. And so they brought the deaf man to Jesus to see if His power would cure the deaf mute.... The Gospel tells us of the results of turning to the Messiah.

Speaking of this area of healing, I wonder if you know that the priest or deacon who is baptizing an infant blesses the ears and mouth of the newly baptized? When I was going through the four year deacon program, I didn't find out till near the end of formation, that once ordained, I would use a special oil for the chrismation of the ears and mouth of the infant that I was baptizing.

This is in part, a sign of healing from the effects of the original sin we are born into... but it is also related to recognizing the work of Jesus in healing this man in today's Gospel of Mark.

Recall that they brought the disabled man to Jesus... It provides us with a lesson that all healing comes from God... from Jesus. That gives me opportunity to make a point related to exorcisms in the Catholic Church's practices... Exorcism is a form of healing.

To start with, you may know that the role of exorcists is quite firmly controlled by the diocesan bishops... unlike perhaps other churches where ministers may decide about becoming exorcists... And I haven't done any research on this point, but it is often reported that other denominations will refer a demonized person to the Catholic exorcist when their ministry hasn't led to healing results.

The Catholic rite has been defined by the Roman Church over time and involves invocations, prayers, creeds and responsive readings. And the follow up to that is that the preparation and prayers of the Catholic Church through its exorcists state clearly that they are acting by the authority of Christ Jesus... it isn't the power of the exorcist that brings about any healing or cure. In fact, in preparation for going to see someone who may be demonized, the exorcist is told to spend time in prayer and even go to confession himself each time before entering into this form of healing ministry for someone in need.

Let us recognize that Jesus is the reason for healing and recovery. Our Blessed Mother or favorite patron saint may assist by interceding for us... but cures come from Jesus. AMEN? AMEN!!