

There is a story that in Strausbourg, France - a soldier during World War II came upon the ruins of a church that has suffered the effects of bombings in the area. A statue of Christ, with arms outstretched still stood in the midst of the rubble.

On closer examination, the soldier discovered that both hands of the statue were sheared off by falling rubble.

And on the base of the statue, someone had written:

*He has no hands but yours.*

In today's Gospel, we hear the story related of Jesus curing a deaf mute by word and action.

In word, Our Blessed Lord says: "*Ephphatha*" – literally, "*Be opened*," an Aramaic word based on the Syrian dialect.

This Aramaic word is part of our liturgical vocabulary to this day.

In the Baptismal rite, the ears and tongue of the person baptized are touched by the priest who says "*Ephphatha*," commanding the ears to open to the Word of God and the mouth to open to the praise and glory of God.

The action being that Jesus puts His fingers in the man's ears, spits on the ground, and looks up to heaven and groans.

The great miracle of our redemption is the Incarnation – that is, God becomes man.

God is not afraid of our lowly condition.

The touch of Our Savior is a sign of God's desire to be part of our everyday life. No part of our day should be kept from God.

The great saints recognized the Presence of God in every moment – yet this requires an effort on our part.

When we walk out these doors, we hopefully don't think we are leaving God behind.

Rather, throughout the sacramental action of the Eucharist, worthily received, we go forth from this place as the hands of Christ ... and with

the indwelling of the Trinity in our hearts, we can bring the Word of God to a world in desperate need of it.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray that the graces we receive this day at this Mass will empower us to be the hands of God reaching out to a broken world, and may our words and actions proclaim the Gospel truth to a society in desperate need of Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.