

## Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear parishioners,

We can all think of people who have enriched our lives in one way or other. We think first, perhaps, of family and close friends in whose company we feel happy and who bring out the best in us. We cannot ever be all that God wants us to become without the support, inspiration and help of others. There is so much we can only receive in relationship with others. We know that from our experience of family, of school, of our social circle and of church. In fact parish life would be impossible unless all the networks of human contact were working to build up the community.

In the gospel today a deaf and dumb man is brought to Jesus by others. Without their help he could never have made his way to Jesus. There were obviously people in his community or village who were keeping an eye on him or looking after him, and they brought him to someone they believed could be of help to him. They led him to a person he could not have reached by himself. These people were a life-giving presence in the man's life. The kind of scene related today is repeated more than once in the gospels. Another example is that passage early in Mark's Gospel where a paralysed man was brought into the presence of Jesus by a group of his friends, even though it meant that they had to create a hole in the roof of the crowded house where Jesus was preaching.

Such gospel scenes are repeated in the lives of people today. People take those who are handicapped or seriously ill to Lourdes, Walsingham or other places of pilgrimage. There are people here in our own parish who visit people within the confines of the parish itself, the eucharistic ministers or the members of our SVP. We all have the capacity to make the lives of others richer and most of us do that more regularly and to greater effect than we sometimes realise. It is worth thinking of those who, within our family circle, in our group of friends or within our parish who make *us* richer and *how*.

**Father Patrick**