

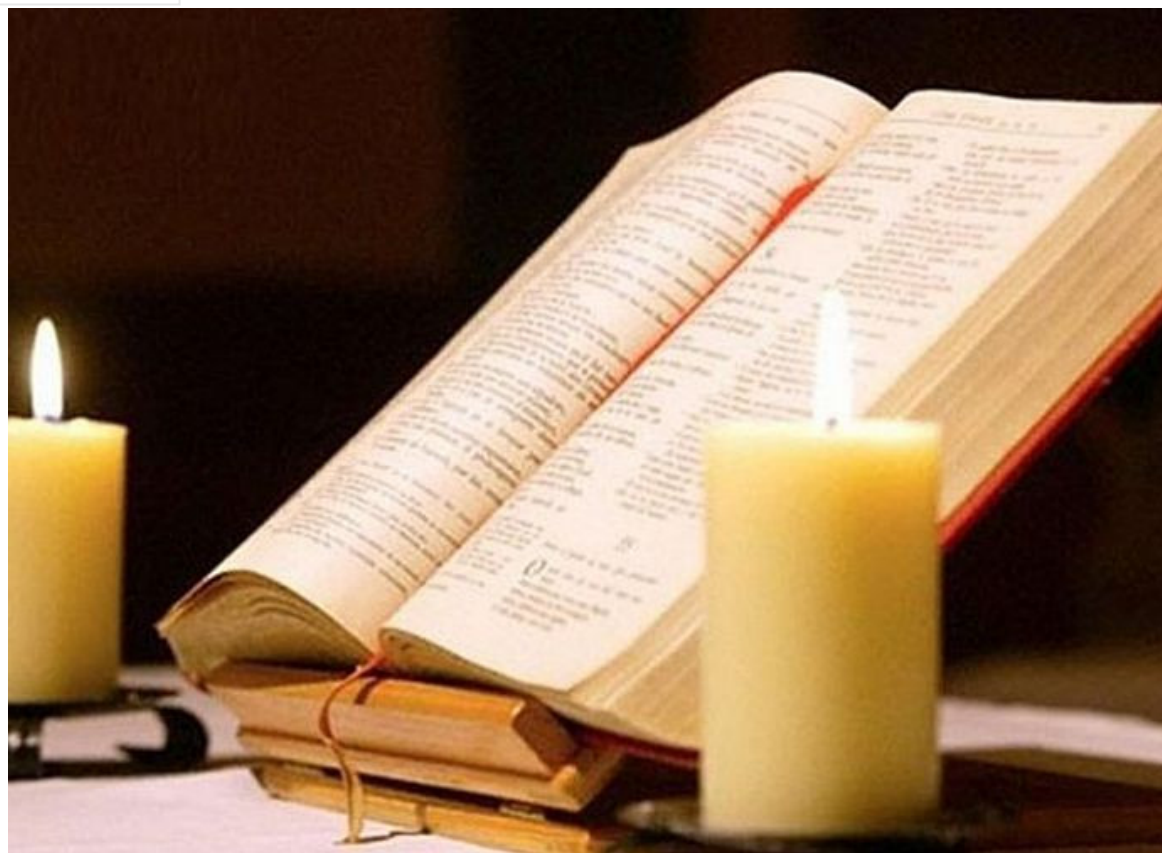
**GOSPEL PEARLS**

## Paths to listening

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*Then Jesus returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more*

*zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7: 31-37)*

In order to evangelize we must first be evangelized. In order to convert, we must first be converted. The deaf-mute man does not speak or does so with difficulty because he cannot hear voices, neither his own nor those of anyone else. Jesus, by healing the deaf-mute man, prepares him for conversion by giving him the possibility to listen to His Word which proclaims His Kingdom in Heaven. Conversion, which leads the soul from the paths of listening to those of obedience to the Will of God, cannot take place, however, without our consent and commitment. Are we committing ourselves every day to do following God's Will or are we doing our best to avoid it?