People brought to Jesus “a deaf man who had a speech impediment. They begged Jesus to cure this man. ... Jesus looked up to heaven and groaned and said to him, “ephphata. ... and immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke clearly.” What a wonderful gift from Jesus, yes?

We all bring requests to God and the Blessed Mother. Many petitions seem to go unheard, unanswered or seem to receive a “no” from God. Maybe those petitions pertain to an individual issue, ... or a family issue, ... or a national or international situation. Maybe the needs are material, or physical, or a spiritual issue ...?

Most of our pleadings before God are not resolved like the one in today’s gospel: miraculously, instantly, powerfully. Resolving most issues requires time, effort, patience and perseverance. They involve much heartbreak, tears, talking, struggling. Resolving issues is “easier said than done.” Some issues seem to have no solution. In this process of talking with God, we can develop a closer, deeper, more intense, more peaceful relationship with God.

In dealing with issues in my own life, I repeatedly whisper one of my favorite prayers: St. Teresa of Avila's prayer: “Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things are passing. God alone remains constant.”

Prayer rarely changes God; prayer changes us. Our pleading before God draws our hearts and our wills closer to God. Because each of us has been created in the image of God, when we pray intensely, we come closer and closer to the deepest part of our being, i.e, to the core of our personality and spirituality.

A funny story. When I was choosing which religious community to enter, I chose the Vincentian Fathers precisely because I wanted to go to the overseas missions, and I never wanted to teach. I've been ordained 42 years. I've spent most of my life teaching, and I've never been sent to the overseas missions! ... and the irony is that I am very happy in teaching and writing. Sometimes God and other people might know us better than we know ourselves. That list of persons may include our parents, professors, coaches, religious superiors.
For the times when my prayers seem not to go unanswered, I keep in my wallet the following prayer:

I asked God for strength that I might achieve. I was made weak that I might learn to obey.  
I asked God for health that I might do great things. I was given infirmity that I might do better things.  
I asked God for riches that I might be happy. I was given poverty that I might be wise.  
I asked God for power that I might have approval. I was given weakness that I might feel the need for God.  
I asked for all thing that I might enjoy life. I was given life that I might enjoy all things.  
I got nothing that I asked for but everything I hoped for. I am among all people most richly blessed.

Our deepest satisfactions will come from being real, being honest, facing as best as possible the complicated situations in our lives. In that process we have the possibility, when praying, to draw closer to God, other people, and our most authentic self. When we pray we might not get what we want, but we likely will get something much greater: intimate union with Jesus and his mother.