

Immaculate Tongue

Sermon Transcript • August 9, 2026

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

“And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue. And looking up to Heaven, He groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, that is, Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.”

And he spoke right.

Dear friends, if ever there were a phrase that captures what our holy tradition esteemed with regard to the use of the tongue, this is that phrase: “And he spoke right.”

In fact, the Sacred Scriptures are replete with exhortations regarding the proper use of this small but powerful instrument:

“The tongue of the wise adorneth knowledge; but the mouth of fools bubbleth out folly.”

“A mild answer breaketh wrath; but a harsh word stirreth up fury.”

“The stroke of a whip maketh a blue mark; but the stroke of the tongue will break the bones.”

“A peaceable tongue is a tree of life; but that which is immoderate shall crush the spirit.”

“Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have perished by their own tongue.”

“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; but they that deal faithfully please Him.”

“He that keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from distress.”

“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.”

“Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth; but that which is good, to the edification of faith, that it may administer grace to the hearers.”

“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.”

“And if any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.”

“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Dear friends, given the import of speaking right to the true practice of our holy religion, it behooves us to consider Our Lady’s manner of being in this regard.

When Our Lady was confused, she humbly sought understanding, saying, “How shall this be done? Because I know not man.”

When her understanding was sure, Our Lady offered her verbal assent: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.”

And when her greatness was praised, Our Lady redirected the glory to God, saying, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.”

When she was mystified by her divine Son’s conduct, she revealed the tenderness of her heart in these words: “Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.”

When a friend’s need pressed upon her, Our Lady stated their need to her Son with simple confidence: “They have no wine.” And when others judged her rebuffed, with quiet authority she obliged them still to the obedience which she herself had always kept: “Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye.”

And then came the scourging and the crowning, the long, bitter Golgotha road, the nails, the Cross driven into the hill, the mocking voices, the spoiled wine, and the commendation of His Spirit to God. Through all these hours, as her Son before, as a sheep led to the slaughter, she opened not her mouth.

“She was a Virgin, not only in body, but also in mind; humble in heart, grave in speech, sparing of words, modest in discourse. On the lips of Our Lady there was nothing of the gall and poison of the devil. There was nothing forward in her words, nor was her voice petulant. The very appearance of her outward being mirrored the image of her soul. Grace, and grace alone, was shed abroad on her lips.”

Dearest friends, for these reasons and more, one faithful disciple of St. Bonaventure wrote the following concerning the holiness of Our Lady’s speech:

“Truly, there is not, nor ever was, nor ever will be, such another woman upon earth as Mary was, in her glorious life and in the science of words of a most skilled tongue.”

And Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

O dearest friends, would that our hearts might possess something of the purity of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and from the abundance of that purity our mouths might speak into every situation that attends our daily lives.

“If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.”

“Thy lips, fairest lady, are as a dropping honeycomb. Honey and milk are under thy tongue.”

And taking him from the multitude apart, Jesus put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, Jesus then touched his tongue. And looking up to Heaven, Jesus groaned and said to the deaf

and dumb man, “Ephpheta, that is, Be thou opened.” And immediately the man’s ears were opened, and the string of the man’s tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.

And he spoke right.

And with this miracle rehearsed, and Our Lady’s example of holy speech set before us, on this Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, as we continue our mini-catechesis on the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as we come to receive upon our tongues and in our persons the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, let us beseech our blessed Lord to touch our tongues and to loosen their strings, so that we might speak right; that we might speak in a manner which mimics the Immaculate Tongue of His Holy Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, saying to our Heavenly Father:

“Almighty, everlasting God, who in the abundance of Thy kindness art wont to go beyond our merits and our prayers, pour down Thy mercy upon us; forgive us aught whereof our conscience is afraid, and grant us all we dare not ask in prayer.”

“Pardon, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the offenses of Thy servants, that we who of ourselves are not able to please Thee may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of Thy Son, Our Lord. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.”

Saint John Marie Vianney, pray for us.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.