

4th Sunday of Ordinary Time



THE GOSPEL. **Mark 1:21-28**

*The people were astonished at his teaching,
for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.*

Dear God,

our
hope
is
that
you will
amaze us;

win us
with your words;

spellbind us
with your love.

And let us, with you,
cast out unclean spirits
from this world:

human
trafficking,
the pandemic,
the climate crisis,
racial bias,
poverty,
greed,
war.

Make the
unclean spirits
obey you,

in
our
small
efforts.

THE FIRST READING Deuteronomy 18:15-20

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kin.

God,
do you raise up prophets
as in the time
of Moses?

Let us find them all around
as you put your words
into their mouths.

Let us listen.
Let us
hear.

THE SECOND READING. 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Brothers and Sisters: I should like you to be free of anxieties.

Lord
of Peace,

we want to love you only,
minus distractions,

minus
anxieties.

Give us
peaceful souls
and trusting hearts
this day and all our days,
free of distractions and anxieties. *Anne Osdieck*

REFLECTION: Fr. Rosendo Urrabazo C.M.F., from U.S. Catholic

In today's Gospel, Jesus heals a man possessed by an evil spirit. He does this just by saying, "Come out of him!" There are no rituals, no magical gestures, no incantations. Like his Father, his word is enough; it is creative and healing. All he has to do is speak and it happens. To say it is to make it happen. Jesus truly is the "Holy One of God."

The curious thing is that in this gospel the one who recognizes this is not one of the apostles or disciples. It is an evil spirit who is asking to be left alone.

Speaking through the possessed man, he says with confidence and fear, I know who you are: "Have you come to destroy us?"

Mark's Gospel often has the most unlikely people recognizing the true identity of Jesus, in contrast to the Scribes and Pharisees, and even his own disciples. One example is the Roman soldier at the crucifixion of Jesus, who exclaims, "Truly this man was God's son." I guess he saw the resemblance!

Mark's Gospel reminds us that Jesus is the Word of God. Like his Father, he sees all of creation as good but in need of healing. His mission is to restore and bring back to health all those who find themselves surrounded by evil, to bring salvation to those who have lost their way with words of compassion and healing.

In the first reading from the book of Deuteronomy, Moses promises the people that God will send them a prophet, like himself, who will speak God's word. Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise. His miracles are God's words in action. He is God's word in the flesh. Even those outside of the faith community, even "evil spirits," recognize Jesus as the "Holy One of God." Today we could say, "Like father, like son."

This week let us also speak God's word. In our conversations with others and the good works that we do, let people see in us what others saw in Jesus.
