

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Gospel: Mark 1.21-28
January 31, 2021

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Brothers and Sisters Today, the Gospel invites us to look at ourselves, our inner selves.

Mark tells us of the first public action of Jesus, - exhibiting his power over demons. This power amazed the people who witnessed the exorcism, but there is one additional aspect to this event. The exorcism took place in a synagogue, and nobody tell the unclean spirit to be quiet, to sit down, or to get out. It is the opposite, they seem pretty happy to let him speak for them, because he is one of them and they are like him.

This man is not the unusual or strange person there that day. Who is? Who is the unusual and strange one that day? – Jesus - Jesus is the one that astounds them and seems so different from what they've seen or heard before.

Brothers and Sisters, the people of the synagogue are so lost to themselves that the good news of Jesus becomes strange and unusual.

They say:

“What is this? - Is it new teaching? – with what authority?”.

And the same experience is lived by many people. Sometimes, we become so lost to ourselves, so self-estranged, that the good news sounds strange to us.

Bothers and sisters, the most dangerous unclean spirit is the evil that we are comfortable with.

Sometimes we tolerate an evil because we have become tired of trying to change it. Sometimes we are simply afraid to change something in our life, or to confront an evil in someone else's life. We lack the strength to face the evil.

Maybe there's something within us that we know is wrong and we're not happy about it, but we dismiss the seriousness of the problem because... well... "That's just the way we are. We've always been that way."

Sometimes the evil can be a sin that we think we have under control because so far, nobody around us has confronted or rejected us because of it, or it has not – yet – brought us serious negative consequences.

Maybe we're afraid to take a stand against an evil because it's what everyone does. And so we go along with the crowd, even though deep down, we know we should not be doing that.

Brothers and Sisters, we heard, that the unclean spirit recognizes Jesus. He says:

"I know who you are," he says, "the Holy One of God".

We all know, but we usually forget, that Jesus Christ has the power to cast out these unclean spirits from our hearts.

Brothers and Sisters, even in the midst of our darkness there is still something within us that knows and can recognize the Holy one of God. No matter how lost we are to ourselves the ability to recognize the Holy One remains within. And, the reason is, because the Holy One has never left us. The Holy One is within us. We must always keep these words in our minds. - we are not alone; he is with us ...

But the first step for interior healing is the recognition of the evil living within us.

In Baptism we entered into the life of Christ, and we were invested with his authority. Thus, by the power of our Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, we can order the unclean spirits in our lives to "Come out!".

We can begin with the smallest temptation. And, the moment we recognize that we are being pulled in the direction of sin, we can stop and command the tempter to "get out," to leave us alone, in the name of Jesus Christ

Let us ask the Holy Spirit to remind us that when we are acting in the name of Jesus Christ, all things are possible according to his will.... Amen