

## “Jesus’ Authority”

Our first reading today introduces us to what the Gospel is all about; or we might say, the Gospel is the fulfillment of our first reading. It points us to the one who speaks God’s word. It points us to Jesus as the fulfillment of Moses’ prophecy that God will send a prophet like him. However, the Prophet that is sent is more than a prophet. He is the light that reveals God to His people. He is the only begotten Son of God.

In our second reading, St Paul points us to the fact that both married and single people need to develop a love affair with Jesus, though in slightly different ways. The married couple, through their love affair with Jesus, with each other, and their neighbor would attain heaven. While the single person through their love affair with Jesus and their neighbor would attain heaven.

The spirituality of both a married couple and a single person grows when they spend quality time with God in Praying, Meditating on Scripture, worshipping Him in His house, listening to God as He speaks to them, and also in their love and service to others for the sake of God. Our Gospel reading, shows the authority in Jesus’ teaching and His power over the force of evil.

In those days, Capernaum, a big City similar to Sodom and Gomorrah, was the epicenter of trade, wealth, and the evil that goes with wealth when God is not the center of our lives. It was a sinful City, full of corruption, and self-indulgence, which makes the City a great spot for Jesus to start His ministry.

In the prologue according to the Gospel of Mark, we are introduced to Jesus’ teachings by Mark saying, **“The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God”** which points us to who Jesus is and where His authority came from.

In the Synagogue, the people were amazed at His teaching because He taught with authority unlike their Scribes who would quote other sources in order to be credible. This is especially obvious in Jesus’ teachings in the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ in the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus would quite often use similar words in saying, **“You have heard that it was said to the men of old ..., But I say to you ...”** Jesus got His authority through His obedience to His Father.

The people were not only mesmerized by His words that were full of authority, but were astounded when He ordered a demon out of a man who was possessed. Usually, if a demon possessed person is found in the synagogue, he would be ordered to leave. However, instead of ordering the man to leave, Jesus commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Teaching us that the power of good is far superior to power of evil.

One would wonder why Jesus would order the evil spirit to be quiet instead of letting it make Him known to the people. One possible answer is, Jesus wanted to be known for His authority and not His identity. Usually you do not want an adversary to define who you are because he will twist your identity to come out looking bad to others. Jesus’ identity was later made known at His baptism by His Father and the Holy Spirit.

From the beginning of His public office, Jesus chose 12 men as His Apostles to be with Him and to participate in His mission. He gave them a share in His authority and sent them out to preach about the kingdom of God and to perform all sorts of healings freeing all people from the power of the devil.

This shared authority has been passed on from one generation to the next in the Church Jesus Christ founded on Peter and the other apostles. He gave an assurance that the gates of hell will never prevail against His Church and that He Christ, will remain with the Church always. He gave us His sacraments and promised another advocate, the Holy Spirit to be with His Church. This authority given, is being handed on from Peter to popes who came after him and from the other Apostles to bishops from one generation to the other, and will be until the end of time.

The devil does not need to sleep nor does he take a vacation. He and his demons are always at work prowling like a roaring lion looking for people to bring to their side by using every trick in the book to deceive them. He attacks when we are the weakest so we can make bad choices. For example, when we have pride, lust, greed, envy, unrighteous anger, gluttony and sloth in our hearts, the devil attacks. But there is one who is more powerful than the devil. He is Jesus Christ and He would be right there to help us if we truly call upon Him.

As we come to receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, let us give thanks to Him for all His blessings on us and our families.