

**4th Sunday in Ordinary Time/ Gospel of Mark Chapter 1 verses 21-28 Homily
given by Deacon Tony/ January 31, 2021**

We should always celebrate victories in Christ, so before we break open the words of the Gospel, let me tell you what happened at work.

As most of you know I work in the prison and in the prison all of us carry radios on our hip. So, this one morning as one of the civilians is making their way to the school building, I radioed ahead to one of my coworkers, "Hey Edge, make sure she has her keys with her." The reason for this is just the day before she did not have her keys because she was counting on someone else being in the building to let her in.

However, that person never showed up. So, after a while of banging on the door on a cold morning she had to wait until one of us showed up to let her in. So, my buddy responds back, "Yup she's got her keys" to which I respond back, "Thank you JESUS." Radio silence. Now why that is so weird is that broadcast went over the radio and was heard by not only those carrying radios but by all who were within earshot and not one smart remark was said. In all my 31 and a half years only one other time have I heard the name of Jesus broadcast over the airwaves. I did it before about 6 years ago. Victory for Christ.

Well today we witness another victory for Christ as we break open the Gospel. A cursory read of the Gospel is, Jesus enters the Synagogue, there is a man with an unclean spirit and Jesus rebukes that spirit and then goes about his business as if nothing ever happened. But a closer read reveals this; when the man with the unclean spirit calls out to Jesus he says, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?" Who is US? For just a few lines before it said there was a man with an unclean spirit, meaning one person. So why did this unclean spirit call out what have you to do with us? To find out we open our bibles to the Gospel of Matthew chapter 12 verses 43-45. It reads,

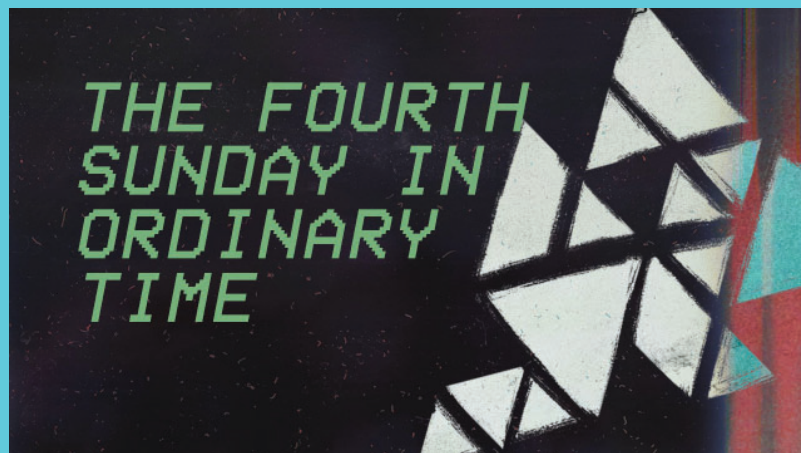
"When an unclean spirit goes out of a person it roams through arid regions searching for rest but finds none. Then it says, "I will return to the home from which I came." But upon returning, it finds it empty, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and brings back with itself seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they move in and dwell there: and the last condition of that person is worse than the first."

So, what happens is our sin is our sin meaning it is a repeat performer in our lives. When you repent of your sins you then go to confession, you receive absolution. You receive forgiveness for your sins but the propensity to recommit that same sin remains

because it is imbedded into our psyche, into our appetite for it is our disordered passion. So immediately after receiving absolution a void exists as we have just purged this disordered passion from our souls and now, we must fill the void with things of God. So now bringing this back to the Gospel we can surmise the man with the unclean spirit must have given to God what hindered him from getting closer to God. Now as he was Jewish, they did not have confession as we know it, so he offered up what was distancing him from God. But here is where the void was created and because he did not immediately fill it with things of God that unclean spirit returned and finding its old home still empty, swept clean and put in order it gathered seven spirits more evil than itself and went back into the man which is why he called out, "What have you to do with US" Jesus of Nazareth? Jesus rebukes those evil spirits and they come out of the man.

What we see here is the Genesis of absolution. Where Jesus forgives our sins, he rebukes them, allowing us to begin anew. This man with the unclean spirit was now made whole and Holy once again. Victory for Christ. Let us pray he learned from the experience. But let us also pray for ourselves that we have gained wisdom and insight of how we might be brought closer to Christ.

God Bless You All!



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