

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year B - 4th Sunday of Ordinary Time

A resource for personal, family and community prayer:

“Be quiet...”

LECTIO STEPS - The five ‘Rs’: *Reading, Recognising, Responding, Resting, Reflecting.*

Gospel: Mark 1:21-28

You are invited to read the Gospel passage attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.

²¹ Jesus and his followers went as far as Capernaum, and as soon as the Sabbath came Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. ²² And his teaching made a deep impression on them, because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.

²³ In their synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit, and it shouted, ²⁴ “What do you want with us, Jesus

of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.” ²⁵ But Jesus said sharply, “Be quiet! Come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and, with a loud cry, went out of him.

²⁷ The people were so astonished that they started asking each other what it all meant. “Here is a teaching that is new,” they said “and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.”

²⁸ And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.

Lenten Lectio for Newcomers Saturday 17th February 2024.

Continues each Saturday in Lent | 11.30am-12.45pm. For more information contact the Lectio Office (Mon-Sat 10-5pm) T: 028 302 62178 E: lectiocentre35@gmail.com

Reading

Today we continue to read from chapter one of St. Mark's Gospel - the dynamic and successful start to the Public Ministry of Jesus in Capernaum, in Galilee. The passage may be divided into three sections for meditation.

Vs.21-22 It is the Sabbath day and Jesus goes into the local Jewish synagogue and preaches the word of God to the assembled congregation. People are impressed by the simplicity and the depth of what he has to say; it resonates with their own life experience, touches their hearts and invites them to open up to a new 'seeing' of God's coming into their lives.

Vs.24-26 One of those present, known to be possessed by "an unclean spirit", is clearly agitated and feels threatened by the spirit of Jesus and his life-giving words. Charged with goodness and love, Jesus drives out the unclean spirit and sets the man free.

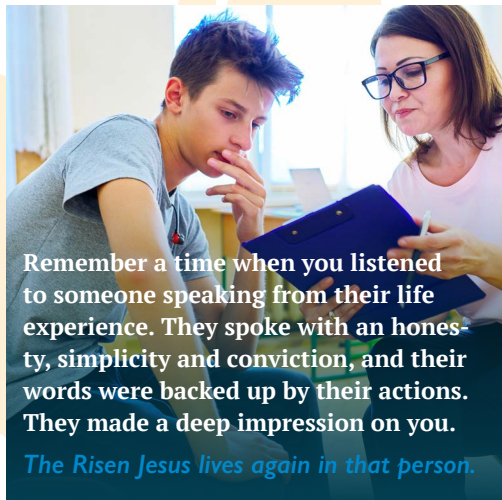
Vs.27-28 People are astounded by what they have just witnessed and Jesus' reputation as a preacher and healer spreads rapidly.

Recognising

Let this beautiful passage speak to your life experience – an event, happening or relationship where you have experienced something similar to that situation as described in the Gospel: be it in your own personal life, the life of others, the church, the country or the world (MEDITATION STAGE). Allow the

memory and the passage to get to know each other and discover all that they have in common, until you feel to say, 'I recognize this passage!' This is truly Good News: the Risen Jesus is alive and at work among us, doing today what he did long ago.

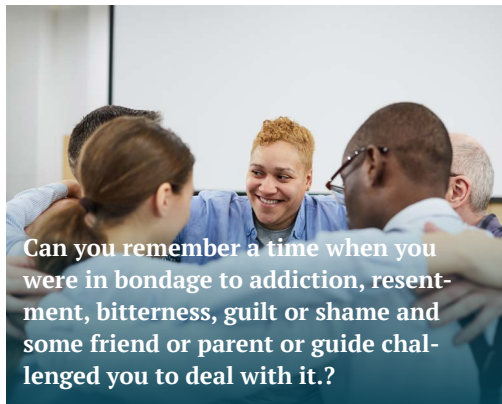
"His teaching made a deep impression on them...he taught with authority."



Remember a time when you listened to someone speaking from their life experience. They spoke with an honesty, simplicity and conviction, and their words were backed up by their actions. They made a deep impression on you.

The Risen Jesus lives again in that person.

"And it (unclean Spirit) shouted, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.'"



Can you remember a time when you were in bondage to addiction, resentment, bitterness, guilt or shame and some friend or parent or guide challenged you to deal with it.?

At first you denied it, reacted angrily, but you knew it was the truth. After a long struggle to come to terms with it, the demon eventually left you. *I now recognize God's presence in this.*

“And the unclean spiritcame out of him.”

Another way to enter in to the story is to remember a time when you witnessed the power of goodness and love to overcome the demons of racism, elitism, prejudice, hatred or violence. *I can see now that God was in that place.*

Responding

Having recognised God's presence in life, you are invited to respond in your own words, in PRAYER (thanksgiving, repentance and petition). Below are sample prayers, please try to make your own specific to your meditation. In time you may feel to include in the prayer some words or phrases from the passage itself.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the inspiring teachers of your Word. Their teaching has made a great impression on us because they, “unlike the scribes”, have spoken with the authority of their experience and have embodied it by their actions. Thank you for the healing power of their words. They have inspired us with

new hope and desire for a better life and a better world.

Lord, have mercy for the “unclean spirits” of half-truths, untruths and twisted truths that have taken possession of our culture and greatly diminished our humanity.

Father, help us to realise that words really do matter. Help us to be brave enough to speak the truth in all our conversations so that our words may be a source of healing and life for others – “throwing the unclean spirits into convulsions.”



Heavenly Father, thank you for the inspiring teachers of your Word.

Resting

You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply resting your heart in God's presence (CONTEMPLATIVE MOMENT). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. “Be quiet”.

Reflecting

From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to reflect, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (WISDOM MOMENT).

From your journey with this passage what new insight or understanding has been given to you into the meaning of 'True Authority', or 'Integrity' or 'the Power of Love'?

“ONLY LOVE CAN OVERCOME EVIL.”



Reading

Jesus' teaching makes an impression on the people listening to it. Jesus takes the opportunity to put his teaching into practice by healing a man who is sick. The people are astonished and the news of Jesus spreads around the countryside because his actions are in sync with his teachings.

Recognising

Can you remember a 'Jesus person', maybe a teacher or coach, who made an impression on you because they lived what they taught, they practise what they preach?

Can you remember a time when you were astonished by the goodness of another person, maybe the sacrifice of a parent or love of a grandparent?

Responding

Father, I thank You for the 'Jesus people' who devote their lives to practising what they preach and who make the world a

better place by their goodness and the sincerity of their heart.

Father, I am sorry for the times that my words and actions were not in sync, when I didn't practise what I preached, and other people suffered as a result.

Father, I ask that You grant me the spirit of Jesus to be genuine in all that I do and say so that others may come to know Your Son through the goodness of my words and actions.

Resting

Rest in the loving embrace of the Father by repeating "HOLY ONE OF GOD" for as long as it is possible. May you be filled with sincerity of heart that comes from resting in the life-giving presence of the Father.

Reflecting

Words of goodness make an impression when matched by actions of love.