

# Sunday Message

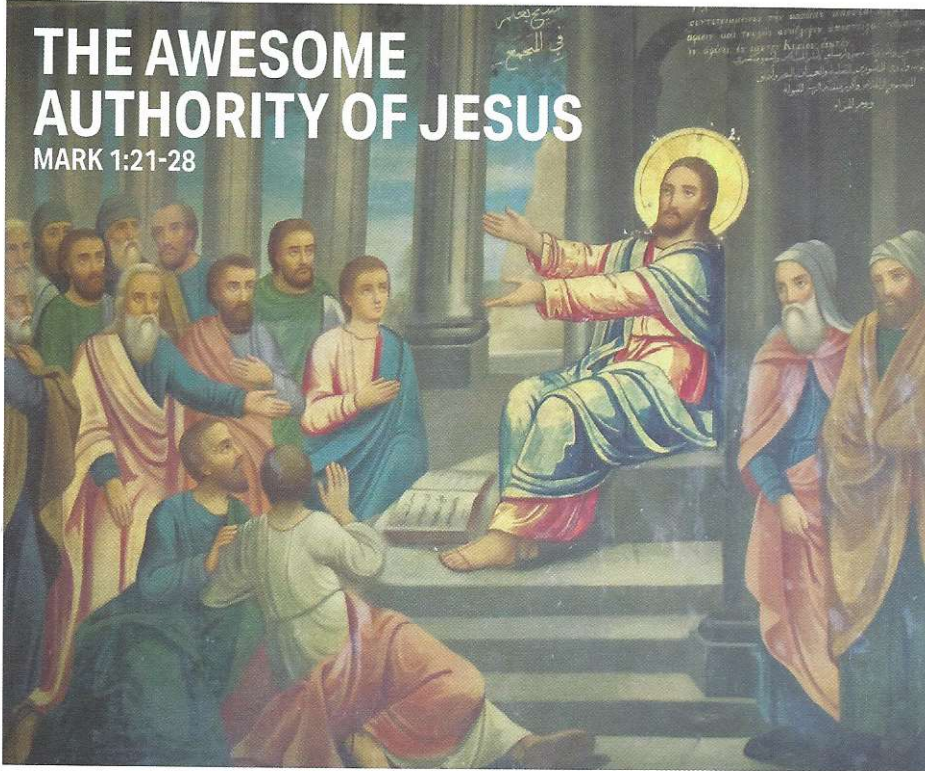
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • 28 January 2024 • Psalter Week 4

## THE AWESOME AUTHORITY OF JESUS

MARK 1:21-28



**Jesus is preaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. It's his first time preaching in a synagogue. The synagogue was one of the most important religious institutions in Jesus' day.**

The word "synagogue" comes from the Greek *synagōgē* and means "assembly." In Galilee in the first century AD, every town and village had its synagogue. It was a place for prayer, worship and instruction in the Jewish faith.

As soon as Jesus begins to teach, those present are amazed. They are impressed because they can see the difference between his preaching and that of other religious leaders. Jesus' teaching is unlike anything they have heard before. It has authority. They can feel it; they can see it. His words not only have the power to move people, they make things happen.

A man with an unclean spirit is sitting in the congregation. As soon as Jesus begins to teach, the man interrupts him, and starts to shriek and shout. He knows who Jesus is, and he is afraid. Jesus rebukes him, and immediately the unclean spirit vanishes.

Jesus' teaching is more than the words he speaks; it is also expressed in his actions. That is why the people marvel at what they have witnessed, why they say to themselves: "Here is a teaching that is new, and that has authority behind it."

The authority that Jesus displays is the authority of God himself. It is the power of the Holy Spirit, which he received at his baptism in the Jordan, that enables him to speak with such conviction and wisdom.

Jesus' teaching is unlike anything his listeners have heard before. It can literally change people's lives. ■

## REFLECT

It's no surprise that we tend to be cynical about those in authority. We have been disappointed so often on so many levels. Politicians who enter office promising a bright new dawn turn out to be no different to those who preceded them. People admire and respect in the world of sport or celebrity all too often turn out to have feet of clay. Church leaders disappoint when they fail to address adequately the scandals or other pressing issues in the Church.

On the rare occasion when we come across someone who oozes authority, we notice it and it registers. When people have authority, it shows.

Today's Gospel is an opportunity for Christians to think about authority and what it means to have it. First, it reminds us that our greatest authority is Jesus. He is the one who shows us how to live. If we want to know how to live honourably and with integrity – all we need to do is look to Jesus. Whatever it is we want to know about living life well – all we need to do is look to Jesus. We Christians take our cue from Jesus, because he is our teacher, our leader, our model, our guide.

And we Christians are called to be people of authority ourselves. The same Holy Spirit who was given to Jesus in the Jordan has been given to us too. We teach with authority when we live what we profess, when we practise what we believe. That is what impressed people when they looked at Mother Teresa – that she was living what she believed. It is what people see when they look at Pope Francis – that he practises what he preaches. And it gives him extraordinary credibility in the eyes of Christian and non-Christian alike.

It is the kind of authority each of us is called to demonstrate in our own lives. ■

## SAY

**"Help me, Lord, to live in such a way as to give glory to you. Help me to be an effective witness to you in all I say and do. Amen."**

## DO

Think of the example you give to those around us. Are you authoritative? What values do you model?

## LEARN

Jesus speaks to us in the scriptures, in the liturgy and in the voice of his Church.

Jesus is alive and active in our community and our world.

## PRAY

Pray that you will always look to Jesus as your teacher, authority and guide.



**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Save us, O Lord our God!  
And gather us from the nations,  
to give thanks to your holy name,  
and make it our glory to praise you.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Grant us, Lord our God,  
that we may honour you with all our mind,  
and love everyone in truth of heart.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the  
Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Deuteronomy 18:15-20

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Moses said to the people: 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like myself, from among yourselves, from your own brothers; to him you must listen. This is what you yourselves asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the Assembly. "Do not let me hear again" you said "the voice of the Lord my God, nor look any longer on this great fire, or I shall die"; and the Lord said to me, "All they have spoken is well said. I will raise up a prophet like yourself for them from their own brothers; I will put my words into his mouth, and he shall tell them all I command him. The man who does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name, shall be held answerable to me for it. But the prophet who presumes to say in my name a thing I have not commanded him to say, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die."'

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Palm 94 (95):1-2, 6-9

Response:

O that today you would listen to his voice!  
'Harden not your hearts.'

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;  
hail the rock who saves us.  
Let us come before him, giving thanks,  
with songs let us hail the Lord. (R.)

2. Come in; let us bow and bend low;  
let us kneel before the God who made us:  
for he is our God and we  
the people who belong to his pasture,  
the flock that is led by his hand. (R.)

3. O that today you would listen to his voice!  
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,  
as on that day at Massah in the desert  
when your fathers put me to the test;  
when they tried me, though they saw my  
work.' (R.)

**SECOND READING** 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

I would like to see you free from all worry. An unmarried man can devote himself to the Lord's affairs, all he need worry about is pleasing the Lord; but a married man has to bother about the world's affairs and devote himself to pleasing his wife: he is torn two ways. In the same way an unmarried woman, like a young girl, can devote herself to the Lord's affairs; all she need worry about is being holy in body and spirit. The married woman, on the other hand, has to worry about the world's affairs and devote herself to pleasing her husband. I say this only to help you, not to put a halter round your necks, but simply to make sure that everything is as it should be, and that you give your undivided attention to the Lord.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,  
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** Mark 1:21-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

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

In their synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit and it 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.' But Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. 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.' And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
*(all bow during the next three lines)*  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

O Lord, we bring to your altar  
these offerings of our service:  
be pleased to receive them, we pray,  
and transform them  
into the Sacrament of our redemption.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Let your face shine on your servant.  
Save me in your merciful love.  
O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call  
on you.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Nourished by these redeeming gifts,  
we pray, O Lord,  
that through this help to eternal salvation  
true faith may ever increase.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.