



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Mark 1: 21-28.

Jesus came to Capernaum with his followers, and on the sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit; he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" Jesus rebuked him and said, "Quiet! Come out of him!" The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him." His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee.

Mark 1:21-28

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, I long to put you first in my life. It is easy to get caught up in daily activities. But you are not just another activity: you are my Lord and my God. I do believe in you, but I know that I need to believe in you more strongly. I do love you, but I must still strive to love you more than I love myself and my plans. I wish to offer you the best of myself right now in this time of conversation with you.

Petition:

Lord, may I understand that you are the truth. May I love you as Truth-made-incarnate in my heart.

1. Truth and the Good Interwoven:

"For he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." In his encyclical *The Splendor of Truth*, Pope John Paul II reminded us of the necessary link between freedom, truth and the good. He went so far as to say that a correct understanding of this link is essential for the salvation of the world. Jesus taught with authority because he was both the Truth and the Good. Our freedom consists in recognizing this and living accordingly. Do I sincerely seek the truth in my life? Do I sincerely seek what is truly good, or am I conforming myself in some way to the hedonistic and self-seeking standards of the world?

2. Multiplying Our Good:

"What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" When our freedom refuses to recognize that Jesus is the Truth and that our greatest good consists in loving and following him, we feel threatened. We try to hold on to the good we imagine that we have apart from him. He does not want to take away the good we have, but rather he wishes to increase and multiply it. But to do so we must allow lesser goods we now have to die so that greater goods might rise with strength. Unless the seed falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a seed. But if it dies it rises to new life (cf. John 12:24).

3. The Demands of Truth:

"All were amazed and asked one another, What is this? A new teaching with authority." Today we live in a relativistic world, where truth is whatever we want it to be. "Whatever makes you comfortable" is the motto of the day. We are amazed when Jesus breaks the mold of relativism, revealing the lie hidden within it and proclaims that he is the Truth. When the Gospel makes demands on my life, do I shift into relativism and believe that it makes no difference how or if I respond? If the Gospel makes me comfortable I will obey, but if not... Truth can be demanding, but what a blessing it is that, in the person of Christ, truth is also love, mercy, goodness and joy. Do I love the truth and strive to live in the light?

Conversation with Christ:

Lord, you know how easily I excuse myself from meeting your demands for my life. I do so even while knowing that when I fulfill them I always discover new strength, hidden energy and untapped resources of love within me. Help me to give myself to you in love, to meet your demands, and to experience the power of grace unleashed within me.

Resolution:

Today I will offer Christ something that is good but not necessary. By doing this, I will show my love for him and grow in self-detachment, so I can be more open to the good that he wishes to give me.