

2021 January 31

*Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

**Reading:**

**First:** Deuteronomy 18.15-20, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me." (15)

**The Psalm:** 95, "Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." (1)

**Second:** 1 Corinthians 7.32-35 "Brothers and sisters, I want you to be free from anxiety." (22)

**The Gospel:** Mark 1.21-28 "He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." (27b)

**Prophets for the Lord**

Israel received a promise from God through Moses that a Prophet like Moses would be raised from among them with the word of God in his mouth. (Deuteronomy 18.15) That is, he will be the mouthpiece to bring God's word to them. St. Paul today speaks about giving undivided attention to the Lord. As humans we may not be able to do this all the time. But we need to find some time with our busy schedules to give undivided attention to the Lord. This is what the psalmist today wishes for us, "*O that today you would listen to the voice of the Lord; sing to the Lord; and make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.*" (Psalm 95, 1,8)

Pope Francis in his 2018 New Year homily suggested to set aside a moment of silence daily to be with God. This would help "*keep our freedom from being corroded by the banality of consumerism, the blare of commercials, the stream of empty words, and the overpowering waves of empty chatter and loud shouting.*" This moment of silence with the Lord will help recoup our broken lives, achieving the re-integration we badly need. This will provide authenticity and authority for our words and utterances. This moment of silence will help us to keep in check the *idols* we 'worship', which the pope mentions as above.

Such unifying moments and hours of silence with the Lord God, the Father, gave authority to the teachings of Jesus at which the people in the Synagogue were astounded. Because of such authenticity even the evil spirits recognized him as *the Holy One of God*, and obeyed him promptly. Our times and our land today need such voices with authority to teach and authenticity to command to the highly "possessed" world in which we live. The type of "unclean spirits" as we find in the gospel, encountering Jesus with questions, are there in our world today with greater force and added numbers. They may seem powerful to silence us. We must not give in. We need people to sit at the foot of the Lord, contemplate his beauty and listen to him, and then come out with power from above and be the mouth-piece of the Lord to proclaim his Word, and to silence the evil spirits seemingly ruling over our world.

The multitudes of 'devils' in our world today need to hear and recognize the voice of Jesus, the Holy One of God, in and through the voice of those who find moments to set aside for the Lord, and are empowered by their intimacy with him. Every baptized Christian is called and commissioned to be that voice and authority. If we do not exercise that authority the world will continue to be in the dark and in the possession of the evil spirits. Jesus is the Prophet promised to Moses with God's words in his mouth. That Jesus has anointed and empowered us, putting his words into our mouth, and has sent us out to proclaim the word on his behalf. We are the mouth-pieces of God, of Jesus Christ, in our world and in our time. We cannot just afford to keep our mouths shut. Arise, and shine, O people of God!

*(The readings of the day are given at the beginning. The numbers in parentheses refer to the quotes from them. Good to go through the readings beforehand to properly understand the Reflections)*

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