

## **4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time January 31, 2021**

In this Sunday's Gospel we hear how those listening to Jesus teach in the synagogue were "all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."

Wow! New teaching! The first thing that went through my mind when I read this passage is, even at my age, (yes I am older than Father Thom), I have learned so much "new teaching" lately! Thanks to Covid, I have learned to organize meetings using Zoom, arrange for our sacramental programs to be totally online (with lots and lots of help), and visit with my kids all at the same time on Zoom. We even have a family picture with all of us in it thanks to our Christmas Day zoom session and a screen shot! Should you be amazed? Probably not. I certainly don't have any authority so to speak with this new technology! Right now though, I must say, technology has come in very handy!

I did take some time to pray and think about this line in the reading though, "to teach with authority." What does it look like to be able to teach with authority? Does it mean the teacher does not allow you to question what he says? Does it imply that the teacher is an expert? Or does teaching with authority imply the teacher spoke from their heart.

I heard a story once about how two men recited Psalm 23, The Lord is My Shepherd, from memory. The first man was a renowned actor who recited the Psalm with eloquence and flourish, impressing all those who listened to him with his skill and technique. The second man, an ordinary, down to earth type of person, recited the Psalm with such emotion, passion and conviction that all who heard his recital were moved to believe in the Shepherd also.

Dare I say, you can't give what you don't have. To teach with authority is to teach from one's heart. Jesus taught with this kind of authority not only truly understanding the scripture but because he lived it!

Some of us would say that we are or have no authority on teaching when it comes to our faith. But what we can do is share what is in our heart. We can all share the love we have with Jesus and bring others into a love relationship with Jesus too! As believers, we are to make others feel that they belong. Belong, believe, behave!

So, the lesson here for me is not to worry about how much I know but to live in a way that shows what comes out of my mouth is evident in how I live my life.

Well, "Jesus' fame spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee" but I rather doubt I will become famous for the use of my skills on Zoom! Now, time to tune into Zoom with Father Thom! See you "zoom!"

*Reflection by Julie de Gouw, Pastoral Minister*

