

Fourth Sunday Ordinary Time - January 29

Deut 18:15-20; Ps 95; 1 Cor 7:32-35; Mk 1:22-29

Early in Jesus' mission to the Israelites He amazed his fellow countrymen by the authority of his preaching. Here in Capharnaum was the Prophet that Moses spoke of after God's promulgation of the Law at Mount Sinai. Following that awesome event, God had promised to raise up someone of their kin - a Prophet (now being fulfilled in Jesus) to teach the chosen people and save them from their enemy, Satan.

Today's responsorial psalm (95) invites us to acclaim God as the "rock" of our salvation. In the gospel story related by St. Mark today about the expulsion of an evil spirit from a paralytic, Jesus' authority over evil spirits is dramatically highlighted. All in the synagogue were impressed by His authority as teacher and master. Today we are now aware of the nature and many causes of illness and no longer consider innocent persons to be afflicted by evil spirits or punished for their sins. But we are still impressed by Jesus' power to heal and bring peace to someone who suffers. We still believe in miracles!

We also believe that Jesus became one of us to experience the limitations of our flesh more easily, to develop greater sensitivity to human suffering, to be more surely in community with his people, to win humanity as followers and disciples, to be our Friend, sharing our afflictions and also our challenges and our joys.

Each day we can draw closer to Jesus through our prayer and acceptance of any experiences that life may offer us--poverty, violence, illness, misunderstandings as well as peace, love, vitality, prosperity, honors--trying to remember to be thankful and trusting. Jesus came to earth in order to save each of us and to teach us how to live so that we will be able one day to join Him in the community of heaven. Living out our lives one day at a time, experiencing both the challenges and the joys of our particular communities, let us not forget that we have a Friend in the Lord Jesus who chose to be one of us ever since His coming as Man long ago in Israel.

May all of us truly be a people though at times sitting in darkness but still occasionally seeing a "great light."