

CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation

January 29, 2012 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle B)

Gospel reading **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 1:21-28** *[To be read aloud]*



Then they came to Capernaum, and on the Sabbath Jesus 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.

Brief commentary:

For Mark and the Christians of the first century the “unclean spirit” and other “demons” represented evil, mysterious powers hostile to God. In today’s text, the unclean spirit reveals Jesus’ identity and tries to derail him from his mission. Jesus’ words are not only authoritative, but they effect what they say. Everyone was amazed by his teaching and power. Mark is not concerned with stories about Jesus’ birth, but about establishing his identity as the Son of God. Already in chapter 1 Jesus’ powerful actions had drawn followers and enemies and caused his reputation to spread throughout Galilee.

Today’s reading offers three significant messages:

- Mark wants from his readers more than amazement. He wants to make sure they understand that the Son of Man will suffer much.
- Jesus is without a doubt a powerful teacher and a healer.
- Those who wish to follow the “amazing teacher and healer” must also take up their cross and follow him.

For our shared or personal reflection:

After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.

1. Am I a “good times” Christian only or am I also willing to follow Jesus in bad times? Explain.
2. Do I live in fear of the power of evil or do I trust that I follow the One who conquers all evil? Give examples.

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 438; 1673.