Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:21–28: The Cure of a Demoniac

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.

Focus Questions

1. Why were the people in the synagogue astonished at Jesus’ teaching?
2. What did one of the men in the synagogue suffer from?
3. What did the unclean spirit say Jesus was?
4. What did Jesus command the unclean spirit to do, and what happened?
5. Where did Jesus’ fame spread?
Excerpt from the Rite of Exorcism

Directions: Read the following excerpt taken from the prayers a priest today would use to perform an exorcism. Then respond to the reflection questions.

Priest: Save your servant.
All: Who trusts in you, my God.

P: Let him (her) find in you, Lord, a fortified tower.
All: In the face of the enemy.

P: Let the enemy have no power over him (her).
All: And the son of iniquity be powerless to harm him (her).

P: Lord, send him (her) aid from your holy place.
All: And watch over him (her) from Sion.

P: Lord, heed my prayer.
All: And let my cry be heard by you.

P: The Lord be with you.
All: May He also be with you.

P: Let us pray.

God, whose nature is ever merciful and forgiving, accept our prayer that this servant of yours, bound by the fetters of sin, may be pardoned by your loving kindness.

Holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who once and for all consigned that fallen and apostate tyrant to the flames of hell, who sent your only-begotten Son into the world to crush that roaring lion; hasten to our call for help and snatch from ruination and from the clutches of the noonday devil this human being made in your image and likeness. Strike terror, Lord, into the beast now laying waste your vineyard. Fill your servants with courage to fight manfully against that reprobate dragon, lest he despise those who put their trust in you, and say with Pharaoh of old: “I know not
God, nor will I set Israel free." Let your mighty hand cast him out of your servant, (The name of the person), so he may no longer hold captive this person whom it pleased you to make in your image, and to redeem through your Son; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Then the priest commands the demon as follows:

I command you, unclean spirit, whoever you are, along with all your minions now attacking this servant of God, by the mysteries of the incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, by the coming of our Lord for judgment, that you tell me by some sign your name, and the day and hour of your departure. I command you, moreover, to obey me to the letter, I who am a minister of God despite my unworthiness; nor shall you be emboldened to harm in any way this creature of God, or the bystanders, or any of their possessions.

The priest lays his hand on the head of the sick person, saying:

They shall lay their hands upon the sick and all will be well with them. May Jesus, Son of Mary, Lord and Savior of the world, through the merits and intercession of His holy apostles Peter and Paul and all His saints, show you favor and mercy.

All: Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. How do the prayers and words spoken in this rite relate back to the Gospel passage?

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