

Rectoría de San Juan de Dios
IV Sunday of Ordinary Time-Cycle B
Dt 18, 15-20; Ps 95; 1Cor 7, 32-35; Mk 1, 21-28
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Let Us Teach with Authority

The Evangelist Mark presents a Jesus to us who enjoys teaching; it is an important part of his ministry. Mark presents Him teaching at the Sea of Galilee, on the mountain, in the plazas and, as in today's reading, in the synagogues.

We can imagine the people in that synagogue, accustomed to hearing the repetition of a doctrine that told them very little, especially because their teachers, the scribes, didn't have authority to teach, given that they said one thing and did another.

Jesus is able to impress those present and to shake them up in their sleepy consciences. He is able to provoke them into a confrontation with their ideologies.

Jesus teaches as one who has authority, not only because His teaching is coherent with His life or because He has moral authority that far exceeds the teachers of his time, but also because He is able to cast out unclean spirits, as is the case of the man who is liberated in this scene of the Gospel.

To teach with authority then has this characteristic—liberation.

We want to teach with authority, just as Jesus did two thousand years ago. This is possible because we received at Baptism the same Spirit that animated Him to teach in that

way. Exercising the power of the Spirit that we have received is not a figurative idea; it is a verifiable reality.

How important it is to think about living as new teachers or educators and to teach with authority when the world suffers from the lack of two things: teachers and authority! Nowadays it is easier for the institutions and the social and cyber media to *entertain* rather than to *educate*. Many parents do this without thinking about the consequences. And as far as the educational authorities, we can see them left behind.

How do you teach? With what authority? We remember the teachings that we have tried to transmit to others and we ask ourselves if we were authentic and if our teachings served as a liberation.

It seems that it is necessary to exorcise the world, casting out the unclean spirits that marginalize human beings with so many ideologies that are contrary to the Spirit and the Truth of God.

But how do we become teachers with authority? How can we be good educators? The Spirit of God lets us know what is appropriate, but following His Word this Sunday, we can make progress with these three ideas:

1-Let us tune in to the prophetic voice.

Let us listen to what the Spirit is saying, not just the voices that are heard in the media or on the streets. At times we are so entranced with human voices that the voice of God seems absent.

In the first reading, we hear of a people who want a prophetic voice, a voice that guarantees that the decisions they make go hand in hand with the will of God. We can ask

ourselves, “Where is the prophetic voice found?” And we understand that it is found in many places, but the privileged places of the prophetic voice that we need to hear are found united to love. First, in the Word of God that is proclaimed Sunday after Sunday, God speaks with total clarity and penetrates our heart, bringing us to understand a wisdom that surpasses the wisdom of men.

It can be found in a second place, in the institutions that God has founded: the Church and the Family. In the authority shared by the parents of a family, for example, we have to believe that behind the voice of the father or mother of a family, God speaks, because He has given them responsibility for their offspring. What a treasure when a son understands this and tunes into a communication that transcends the voice of his parents!

And finally, in the voice of the friend or couple who are persons mindful of the communication of life and love and are able to tune into the voice of what our spirit is asking for our lives.

It would be good to experience more and more that the decisions that I make in daily life come not from alienation or an ideology nor from my own isolated fabrications, but from my convictions that have already come into harmony with the voice of God.

2- Let us serve with liberty.

Although St Paul is understanding a specific vocation, a special consecration, his proposal is universal; only someone who is capable of shaking off the weight of daily activities in order to give priority to the experience of God can serve the family and God with liberty.

To teach with authority as Jesus did, it is necessary to serve with liberty, based on a foundational experience of God; this experience is incontestable and, for this reason, is clothed with authority.

3-Let us act with the strength of the Spirit.

The teaching authority of Jesus does not come from his knowledge. He is not a mouthpiece, repeating doctrines as did the scribes of His time. Jesus is a person who lives the spiritual dimension of God in Himself. Convictions arise from His inner being that can be passed on to anyone. With His way of setting forth truths, He is able to transform the mentality of those present, especially of who are dominated by an ideology or those who are controlled by an unclean spirit, that is, with a spirit contrary to God.

Here is what is fascinating: the authority of Jesus is seen when the people's ideology is confronted with the Truth of the Spirit of God.

We can act with the strength of the Spirit just as Jesus does. It is not only about acting with moral authority, which in itself already very good, but acting with consistency and maintaining our plan of service and goodness to others. It is necessary to ensure that the result of the teaching will be efficacious and operative, that it will liberate people, as in the case of the possessed person.

I believe that many of us could attest to times in which we have acted in this way, from inside, from a strength that is not just our own, a strength that is not violent, but is a power that convinces. Here is understood what is incontestable about our teaching, about our authority—when with the strength of the Spirit, we are even capable of risking life itself.