

## 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

By Fr. John Speekman

***Moses said to the people: I will raise up a prophet like yourself for them from their own brothers; I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him.***

Cast your mind back over the gospel incident we have read and ask yourself ‘What were the words, what was the teaching, that prompted people to marvel at the authority of Christ?’

There were only six words reported: ***Be quiet, come out of him!***

It was not so much what Jesus said but the power with which he said it; his words were full of power; he could do anything with a word.

To a demon, he could say: ***be quiet***, and the demon would be quiet; ***come out of him***, and he would come out.

To the leper: ***be cured***; to the cripple: ***get up and walk***; to the death and dumb man: ***be opened***; to the dead Lazarus: ***come out***.

Jesus could also say to a sinner: ***Your sins are forgiven***; to a fig tree: ***May no fruit ever come from you again***; to bread and wine: ***This is my Body, this is my Blood***.

The people were astonished at the words of Jesus. Truly it could be said of him what Isaiah spoke as a revelation of God himself (Is 55:11): ***...the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.***

Jesus’ words have power because they are God’s words which cannot be opposed or sidestepped. This is what left a deep impression on the people.

***I will raise up a prophet like yourself for them from their own brothers; I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him.***

Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. Indeed, he fulfills it in a most unexpectedly complete way because Jesus not only speaks the word of God, Jesus IS the Word of God made flesh.

We heard just now that Jesus and his followers came to Capernaum, and we remember how those men became his followers; Jesus had simply said to them: ***Follow me***, and they followed him.

Now Jesus is confronted with a demon-possessed man. The demon is rather garrulous and noisy (we sense its fear). It shouts 25 words at Jesus who ignores them totally and responds sharply with two: ***Be quiet***. Goodness does not engage in conversations with evil; authority rarely shouts; truth is not verbose.

He orders the demon: ***Come out of him***. There are no long incantations with song and dance, just a simple order: ***Come out!***

The demon leaves the man and the man is free. Jesus’ word is always liberating; it actually gives us the freedom to which it calls us. This is the reason Jesus is greater than the Law, which ordered people to become free through obedience but which, at the same time, could not offer them the power they needed to reach it. Jesus always provides the power to reach the goals he sets us. As the saying goes: ***His Will will not take you where his grace cannot keep you.***

Jesus had spoken to the demon and the demon was constrained to obey. But Jesus’ words were also heard by the people standing around. The word of God is all things for all men; when it is spoken there are no ‘bystanders’.

The Word of God cannot be ignored. It can be listened to or it can be disobeyed—but it can never be ignored. That is why Jesus’ word is judgment: ***...he who rejects me and refuses my words has his judge already: the word itself that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day*** (John 12:48).

Jesus came to draw all men to himself. Note from the last line of Gospel today that I was ***his reputation*** that grew, and this is precisely what the Father wanted. He had sent his Son as Saviour of all mankind and his mission was to gather his flock into one.

***And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.***

The word of God is, indeed, alive and active, even today. It is still powerful, liberating, empowering and judging, even today. It comes to each one of us in this Mass, seeking us out, lighting up the hidden, dark places of our soul, determining whether we belong to his flock or not, calling us to become his.

May our astonishment become a simple and total ***yes***.

## READINGS OF THE WEEK

Deuteronomy 18: 15-20

1 Corinthians 7: 32-35

Mark 1: 21-28

January 29, 2012

# 靈 修 生 活

常 年 期 第 四 主 日

范諾怡樞機主教

本主日的福音向我們介紹耶穌為先知。耶穌開始宣講，立刻顯示出祂是一位在言語和工作上都有大能的先知。第一篇讀經為福音做了準備，說到天主答應派遣一位相似梅瑟的先知。第二篇讀經談的則是貞潔和婚姻，邀請我們全心全靈參與耶穌賞賜我們的新生活。

福音告訴我們耶穌開始傳教之初的事。祂在安息日進了會堂，教導人們。耶穌的第一個活動是教導人，因為祂要向我們揭示天主的計劃，這個計劃是向我們通傳新生命的奧秘。

耶穌的教導令人們驚奇，因為祂的教導不是一般的教導。經師們也教導人，但他們的教導沒有權威，他們是根據傳統，根據在他們之前的梅瑟和先知或其他古代的經師們所說的話教導人。耶穌則不同，祂的教導出於祂自己。這樣，展示出祂是天主的聖子，祂不像一般人需要根據過去的傳統來教導人。

從另一方面來說，耶穌的行動也同樣有效力。那時，在葛法翁的會堂裡，有一個附邪魔的人，我們不確切知道邪魔通常怎樣表現出來，不過，那一次，邪魔是以喊叫方式讓人知道它的存在。它喊說：「納匝肋人耶穌！我們與你有什麼相干？你竟來毀滅我們！我知道你是誰，你是天主的聖者。」這邪魔知道耶穌的大能，並宣稱耶穌是聖者；它說：「你來毀滅我們！」耶穌來把人從邪魔的壞影響中釋放出來，賜給他們做天主子女的真自由。

耶穌斥責邪魔說：「不要作聲！從他身上出去！」耶穌只需說這句話，便勝過了那邪魔。那邪魔使那人拘攣一陣，然後大喊一聲，從那人身上出去了。這件事令當時在場的人非常震驚，大家都害怕起來而互相問說：「這是怎麼一回事？這是新的教訓，並具有權威；他連給邪魔出命，邪魔也聽從他。」耶穌的大能肯定了祂的權威。祂不僅用言語，也以行動來顯示祂的權威。這樣，祂以言語和奇跡向人展示了天主的計劃。我們從福音中看到耶穌不僅向人宣講天主的愛，同時也以關注病人、有需要者、兒童、罪人的眾多行動，來向人展示天主的愛。人們於是都認出祂是一位先知。

第一篇讀經取自申命紀，天主藉梅瑟的口向祂的人民許諾要給他們派遣一位像梅瑟一樣的先知：「上主你的天主，要由你中間，由你弟兄中，為你興起一位像我一樣的先知，你們要聽信他。」天主曾多次派遣先知帶領祂的人民，警惕他們不要受誘惑而拜偶像、而行不義的事、而濫權。先知們以天主的名而作權威性的發言，他們帶領人民，保護人民不受罪惡導致的邪惡傷害。

但是，天主所許下派遣像梅瑟一樣的先知的諾言一直還沒有實現，在申命紀完結部分，作者聲明說：「以後在以色列，再沒有興起一位像梅瑟一樣的先知。」(申卅四 10) 因此，以色列民繼續在等待一位像梅瑟一樣的先知來到，給予他們具有權威性的教導和有效力的奇跡。這樣的等待心情，在耶穌時代非常強烈；福音多次告訴我們，他們常常問耶穌是否就是那位已經宣佈了要來的先知。(谷八 28)。

今天的福音告訴我們耶穌的確是那位已經宣佈要來的先知。伯多祿在耶穌復活後所做的一個演講中說耶穌是和梅瑟一樣的先知，更好說，是超越梅瑟的先知，是天主所預許的，因此，我們應該聽從祂。(宗三 21-22) 斯德望在死前在公議會講話時也提醒在場的人這個事實(宗七 37)。

在第二篇讀經中，保祿告訴我們，人的最佳狀況是只掛慮天主的事。這位宗徒希望基督的門徒不掛慮人性的事，而只掛慮天主的事。他說：「沒有妻子的，所掛慮的是主事，想怎樣悅樂主……沒有丈夫的婦女和童女，所掛慮的是主的事，一心使身心聖潔。」

這樣的狀況是人的最佳狀況。但我們也必須承認，要進入這個狀況，必須有特殊的恩召。實際上，天主沒有讓所有的人都度如此充滿靈性如此慷慨的生活。人們一般度的都是較複雜的生活，就是，一方面尋找天主，一方面也尋找世俗的事物。當然，一個結了婚的人，應該掛慮如何養家、如何安排家庭生活。這是一件美好的事。不過，保祿指出，這樣的生活也會帶來某個程度的分心，因為，人不再只想令天主悅樂，而需要也思想其他的事，這樣，人便分裂了。

我們要接納保祿的這個教導。他知道他說這些話是為信徒們的好處，他不是要給他們設圈套，而是為指導、鼓勵他們按照每一個人的聖召，儘量與主在一起。

二零一二年一月廿九日

本 週 讀 經

申 18:15-20 ; 格前 7:32-35 ; 谷 1:21-28