

Tuesday 1st in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 1,21-28): Jesus and his disciples went into the town of Capernaum and began to teach in the synagogue during the sabbath assemblies. The people were astonished at the way he taught, for he spoke as one having authority and not like the teachers of the Law. It happened that a man with an evil spirit was in their synagogue and he shouted, «What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: You are the Holy One of God». Then Jesus faced him and said with authority, «Be silent and come out of this man!». The evil spirit shook the man violently and, with a loud shriek, came out of him.

All the people were astonished and they wondered, «What is this? With what authority he preaches! He even orders evil spirits and they obey Him!». And Jesus' fame spread throughout all the country of Galilee.

«The people were astonished at the way he taught, for he spoke as one having authority and not like the teachers of the Law»

+ Fr. Antoni ORIOL i Tataret
(Vic, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, first Tuesday in Ordinary Time, Saint Mark presents Jesus while teaching in the synagogue and, immediately, he comments: «The people were astonished at the way he taught, for he spoke as one having authority and not like the teachers of the Law» (Mk 1:21). This is quite an extraordinary initial notice. On one hand, what His listeners admire is certainly not the doctrine but the Master; it is not what is said, but Who says it. And, on the other hand, it is not the preacher as much but, rather, specifically who He is: Jesus taught «as one having authority», that is, with legitimate and unimpeachable power. Later on, this particularity is reconfirmed

with a straight comparison: «He did not do it like the teachers of the Law».

A little later, though, the scene of the man with an evil spirit integrates the doctrinal lesson with an admirable motivation: «What is this? With what authority he preaches a new Law!» (Mk 1:27). Notwithstanding, we may as well note the qualifying adjective does not refer so much to the contents as it does to the uniqueness: the doctrine is “new”. Here we find another reason of contrast: Jesus communicates something unheard of (never ever this word could be better applied).

We still add a third remark. His authority comes also from the fact Jesus «even orders evil spirits and they obey Him!». We are facing here such a deep contrast as in the other two previous ones. To the Master's authority and to the newness of His doctrine we must add His power against evil spirits.

Brothers! Our faith tell us this Liturgy of the Word makes us contemporaries of what we have just heard and comment on. Let us ask ourselves with humble gratefulness: Do I fully realize no man has ever said, as Jesus did, the Word of God the Father? Do I feel rich with a message that holds no comparison either? Do I realize what liberating force Jesus and His teachings have in human life and, more specifically, in my life? Touched by the Holy Spirit, let us tell our Redeemer: Jesus-life, Jesus-doctrine, Jesus-victory, please, as the great Raymond Llully liked to say, may we live in a constant “wonder” of You!