

Tuesday of the Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 4:31-37): Jesus went down to Capernaum, a town of Galilee. He taught them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching because he spoke with authority. In the synagogue there was a man with the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out in a loud voice, “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, “Be quiet! Come out of him!” Then the demon threw the man down in front of them and came out of him without doing him any harm. They were all amazed and said to one another, “What is there about his word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.” And news of him spread everywhere in the surrounding region.

“They were astonished at his teaching because he spoke with authority”

Fr. Joan BLADÉ i Piñol
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we can see how His teaching activity was Jesus' central mission of His public life. Jesus' preaching, however, was very different from others, and this surprised and amazed people. Despite the fact Jesus had not studied (cf. Jn 7:15), He, certainly, befuddled the Jews with his teachings, “because he spoke with authority” (Lk 4:32). His style of speech had the authority of he who knows He is the “Saint of God”.

It was precisely such authority in His speech that gave strength to His language. He used living and specific images, without any syllogisms or definitions; words and images He pulled out from the very nature or, more often than not, from the Holy Scriptures. Jesus was, no doubt, a good observer, a man close to human situations: while we can watch Him teaching, we can also see Him so close to people doing good

to them (healing their sicknesses, driving out evil spirits, etc.). In the book of everyday life He read those experiences that, later on, He would use in his teachings. Despite this elementary and “basic” material, the Lord's word was always profound and perturbing, radically new and definite.

The greatest thing about Jesus Christ's speech was how He could combine His divine authority with the most incredible human simplicity. Both authority and simplicity were possible in Jesus thanks to His knowledge of the Father and His relation of amorous obedience with Him (cf. Mt 11:25-27). It is this special relationship with the Father that explains that unique harmony between greatness and humility. The authority of His speech did not adjust to human parameters; there was no competition, no personal interest or glitter. It was the kind of authority manifested both by the sublimity of the word and its humility and simplicity. There never was on His lips any personal praise, haughtiness or shouting. Meekness, gentleness, understanding, peace, truth, light, justice..., this was the aroma surrounding the authority of His teachings.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Everything comes from love, all is ordained for the salvation of man, God does nothing without this goal in mind.” (Saint Catherine of Siena)

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“The Gospel is the word of life: it does not oppress people, on the contrary, it frees those who are slaves to the many evil spirits of this world: the spirit of vanity, attachment to money, pride, sensuality.” (Francis)

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“The fact that God permits physical and even moral evil is a mystery that God illuminates by his Son Jesus Christ who died and rose to vanquish evil. Faith gives us the certainty that God would not permit an evil if he did not cause a good to come from that very evil, by ways that we shall fully know only in eternal life.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 324)