

Sunday 4th (B) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 1,21-28): In the city of Capernaum, on a Sabbath, Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. 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.

«With what authority He preaches!»

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Today, Christ addresses us his resolute command, without question, with authority: «Be silent and come out of this man!» (Mk 1:25). He speaks to the evil spirits living within us that curtail the freedom God has given us and wants us to enjoy.

Perhaps you have noticed that silence is the first rule the founders of religious orders establish when they set up the rules for their community life: on a house where prayer is compulsory, silence and contemplation must reign. There is a Spanish adage that could more or less be translated as: «Virtue is silent; evil is noisy». This is why Christ commands that evil spirit to be silent, because its obligation is to surrender before Him, who is the Word, who «became flesh and made his dwelling among us» (Jn 1:14).

It is true, however, that the awe we feel before our Lord, may stimulate some mixed

feelings of sufficiency leading us to think, as in his confessions St. Augustine says: «Give me chastity and continence, O Lord, but do not give it yet». Because the temptation is to leave our own conversion for later on, right now not coinciding perhaps with our own personal plans.

But the call to radically follow Jesus Christ is for right now and right here, so that His Kingdom may allow us in without difficulty. He is well aware of our tepidity, and He knows that we will not probably immediately follow his will for us to choose the Gospel, but we will rather temporise, struggle along, and just keep on living, without stridencies and without hurry.

But good and evil cannot coexist. A saintly life cannot allow sin. «No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon» (Mt 6:24), says Christ. Let us find shelter in the holy tree of the Cross and let its shadow project itself over our life, and let Him comfort us, help us understand the reason of our life and give us a life worthy of the name of sons of God.