

(Food for thought: Gospel: Mk 1: 21-28)

“Teaching with Authority”



A prophet is a person who claims to have a sense of vision, a special gift of perceiving the truth, and a claim to the authority to proclaim that truth publicly and courageously, especially in the face of opposition. The idea of “teaching with authority” is central to our understanding of the role of the prophet in Scripture.

Today's gospel passage begins with Jesus' entering the synagogue and teaching. Initially it is his teaching that "astonished" the people there. More specifically, they are astonished because Jesus taught, "as one having authority not as the scribes." The cure of the man

with the unclean spirit doesn't seem to be the main focus of this narrative; it only serves to emphasize the "new teaching with authority" that astonished them.

It is important for us to realize that the Lord's prophetic mission did not end when he returned to the Father. He clearly indicated that his followers would, in every age, be called on to carry on this mission in their world. It was perhaps the most significant element of the ritual of baptism in the early church that the newly-baptized person was anointed with sacred oil with the words: "As Christ was anointed priest, prophet and king, so may you live always as a member of his body..." In the ritual for the celebration of Baptism, this anointing with holy chrism, or christening, is highlighted as most significant; it should characterize the

entire life and spirit of the baptized Christian.

May we accept the challenge of Jesus to live our lives in a loving way that allows the world to experience the God through us and to see His face through ours.



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