



4th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Mark 1: 21-28

## ‘The Holy One of God...’

Jesus was reflecting deeply and did not look up at them. Yet, every eye in the synagogue at Capernaum was upon him. Jesus sat on his bench, hunched forward with his elbows on his knees, his hands slowly washing each other.

Jesus’ commentaries on the readings were so brilliant that the congregation eagerly awaited his teaching. No one else dared to speak, completely deferring to him. In the golden hue of the oil lamps, their sepia faces were full of anticipation as the men waited for Jesus to begin.

Their peaceful mediation was shattered when a man came through the doorway of the synagogue and began shouting. He seemed drunk as he lurched into the center of the room and searched for Jesus who had already come to his feet. Peter and his brother Andrew were already moving toward the wild man to subdue him. Seeing Jesus, the crazed intruder’s high-pitched voice shrieked in a staccato babble:

“What do you want of us? What do you want of us,

Jesus of Nazareth?”

He scowled, pointing at Jesus with both hands and, letting his head rear back while his eyes rolled in his head. Everyone was now on their feet and the synagogue roared with their murmuring.

Peter and Andrew were rushing to the crazed man’s side when he screamed with a cracking voice: “Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are...” He leered at everyone in the room holding his outstretched hands above his head.

“You are the Holy One of God!” he said.

Jesus signaled for Peter and Andrew not to subdue the man. Striding toward him with great authority, Jesus shouted above the din: “Be quiet!” The command was so powerful everyone went silent. It was to be the first action of his ministry. Jesus whispered so loudly that everyone heard him. The breathy words came in slow cadence.

“Come out of this man!” Jesus ordered.

In that instant the man’s knees buckled and he collapsed at Jesus’ feet and began to shake violently. His legs fluttered as if trying to shake off the gnawing of unseen evils. Then from the depths of his body the man bellowed in agony. The ethereal bawling unleashed rivulets of fear in the congregation who stood frozen in awe.

Jesus turned from the man at his feet and returned to his bench. Peter and Andrew helped the man to get up and escorted him outside. Those remaining sat wide-eyed staring at Jesus, wondering “Is he really the Holy one of God?”

The murmuring slowly began again and quickly rose to an excited roar as the congregation asked themselves how Jesus could command evil spirits. Truly this is a teacher with such authority as has never been seen before.



This explosive revelation of Jesus’ power still did not convince some of the Jews present that night in the synagogue. They still had to wonder if they were really in the presence of ‘the Holy One of God.’

Even the disciples struggled with this question and later Jesus would ask of them, “Who do you say that I am?”

The revelation of Jesus in our own lives presents the same question to us. Do we live our lives in the sure knowledge that he is ‘the Holy One of God?’ It calls for deep reflection because later Jesus may also ask of us: “Who do you say that I am?”