

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 22nd Week of Ordinary Time - Year 1**

### **St Peter's 8:30 AM Mass - August 31, 2021**

**1 Thess. 5:1-6,9-11** "You know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."

**Psalm 27:1,4,13-14** "One thing I asked, to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."

**Luke 4:31-37** "He taught with authority ... His utterance commands the unclean spirits."

### **The Day of the Lord**

#### **Introduction**

Have you booked your audition yet? After a ten year absence, Canada's Got Talent is coming back to television. Recently, we had visitors who liked this show so I watched it a few times. The America's Got Talent/Britain's Got Talent television phenomenon has been very successful. One of the things I noticed is how the celebrity judges and the audience members work so hard to find new ways to express how amazed. The reactions to the magicians and comedians and dancers and singers is really a big part of the show. Of course, the performers often deserve accolades for their talents.

#### **Luke**

I suppose that many of the people who saw Jesus would encourage him to audition for "Israel's God Talent." I have become quite interested in the words our bible translators use to express the reactions to Jesus. I can imagine them using the internet to look up words. The people were surprised, bewildered, stunned, shocked, startled, stupefied, flabbergasted, or just plain amazed and astounded.

I wonder if the people had the same mentality we do in our culture. They love being entertained. I get that. I do too. I watch sports highlights to get my amazement 'fix'.

The unclean demon that Jesus cast out of a man was none of those. While the people were amazed, the demon was terrified. The key element here is that the unclean demon, a servant of Satan, is the only one in the synagogue in Capernaum who knows fully who Jesus is and what he is capable of doing.

This recognition of the identity of Jesus is central. Do you remember Sunday before last, when we heard of Jesus preaching that his disciples must eat his flesh and drink his blood to have life? They were not amazed. They were, rather, disgusted and went away. But when Jesus turned to those who were left to ask if they were going to leave disappointed in his teaching, Peter spoke up: "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to know and believe that you are the Holy One of God.

Isn't it interesting that, in Luke's Gospel today, we hear that a demon, a servant of Satan, identifies Jesus exactly the same as Peter, but with an entirely different attitude. Peter and the others cling to Jesus in trust, even without fully understanding. The demon runs away from him in terror because he understands what is happening, even leaving the one he had possessed with no harm at all.

And what is happening that the demon notices? The authority of Jesus is evident in both word and deed. They are amazed at him when he teaches in the synagogue and when he casts out the demon. Both are signs of God entering into human history to take it back for the kingdom. Both are signs of the victory of God which is being initiated. This teaching and this exorcism are demonstrations of authority over Satan's kingdom. Now that is something to be amazed at.

## **1 Thessalonians**

St. Paul knows exactly what Jesus Christ is all about. He describes to a persecuted Church at Thessalonica that the Day of the Lord is coming. This Day will be one of judgment for those who reject Christ and one of great victory for those who trust in him. Jesus' miraculous exorcism of the demon takes place, literally, on the literal Day of the Lord, the Sabbath. Now that's real authority. That's something to be amazed at.

The prophets also foretold the Day of the Lord. Human societies, with their vain entertainments and their hatred of truth will be overcome by the kingdom of truth and love. So, Paul declares that, because of Christ, Christians need not fear.

Christians know about this great universal judgment, yet are worried about physical survival. I think we can relate to this after the last 18 months, how fear

has dominated everything about our lives, how it is the only message in the news. Paul says stop worrying. You are children of light, not of darkness. Fear belongs in the dark. Stay close to Christ who is the light.

'Peace and security' was a slogan of the Roman Empire. Just let Rome govern you and everything will be fine, they would say. However, that kingdom is fickle. No matter what the kingdoms of the earth promise, they can bring the opposite in a moment. We have elections coming up and there will be many promises. We should care and we should vote. That's our civil duty. But our peace and security is never in the government. Our anxiety over political and social developments will take away from our trust in the Lord.

### **Call to Action**

What can we do as children of the light, to oppose the darkness of fear and hatred? We can turn to Christ, his victory over death, as the reminder that he wants to cast out the demons in our own lives and hearts. His death is for the forgiveness of sins, yes, but much more it is reorient and restructure our entire existence by submitting to the authority of Christ.

One of the things that has happened to us, without doubt, is that we have been separated from each other. Zoom has kept us in touch but it isn't enough to make us truly one. Today, let us, as the psalmist says, "Be strong and let your heart take courage." Today, let us, as St Paul says, "Encourage one another and build each other up." Let us be amazed and astounded at what Christ wants to do in our hearts at this very moment in our lives. Let us make this our Day of the Lord.

### **Key Scripture Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *Your praise, O God, like your name, reaches the ends of the earth.*

**Collect:** *O God, fill your faithful with holy joy, for on those you have rescued from slavery to sin you bestow eternal gladness.*

**1 Thessalonians:** *Brothers and sisters, you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, "There is peace and security." But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief, for you are all children of light and of the day.*

*For God has destined us for salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that we may live with him. Therefore, encourage one another and build up each other.*

**Psalm:** *The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? One thing I asked of the Lord, to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord. Wait for the Lord. Be strong, and let your heart take courage.*

**Luke:** *Jesus went down to Capernaum and was teaching them on the Sabbath. They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority. In the synagogue, a man with an unclean demon cried out loudly "Let us alone, Jesus of Nazareth. Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent and come out of him!" The demon came out of him without having done him any harm. They kept saying to one another, "What kind of utterance is this? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!"*