

**Homily For Tuesday of the 22nd Week of Ordinary Time - Year 1**  
**St Peter's 8:30 AM Mass - September 5, 2023**

**1 Thess. 5:1-6,9-11** "Jesus Christ died for us so that we may live with him."

**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** "They were amazed at the authority of his teaching and command of the unclean spirits."

**Children of the Light**

**Introduction**

Mothers used to say to their children: "Quit making those faces or your face might just freeze like that." That was supposed to scare us into better behaviour. One of the things that is hardest to talk about when expressing our faith is that there will come a time in each person's life and at some final time in the future, when our eternal future will be frozen in a moment. We tend to think this as mysterious, but really whatever face we have been practising among people and before God will probably be the face that gets frozen in eternity.

Human tendency is to think there is always one more day, always one more chance. But the truth is that, even in this life, the chances run out. We say that a cat has nine lives, but then that's it. If the cat loses count, that's it. A medical event ends this life in a moment. Even a simple fall might change in a moment how we function in the world. These are the worldly dangers we face.

In God's plan, his mercy knows no bounds. Every opportunity is given for repentance. This is important. There is no end to God's mercy, but there is a finality to human rejection of that mercy. At some point, refusal to be reconciled to God becomes permanent.

**1 Thessalonians**

St. Paul tells one of the earliest Christian communities that this will happen on the Day of the Lord. That day of judgment will be a surprise to the rest of the world, but should not be so to you because you are not in darkness. To the rest of the world it will be like a thief in the night, but you are children of light and will be

ready to greet the ultimate source of your light. You won't need that extra store of food and toilet paper because your hearts are right with God.

Human societies, with their vain entertainments and their hatred of truth will be overcome by the kingdom of truth and love. Paul mocks the Roman motto of "peace and security." The kingdoms of the earth promise this, but they can also bring fear and anxiety in a moment. We need human government, but our peace and security is never in the government. Our trust is in the Lord.

We have been through a period of intense fear. It shut down our society. It even shut down our worship. What a terrible evil. That fear has subsided somewhat. However, I think we should be warned that this all pervasive anxiety is lurking just beneath the surface of our society, and is waiting for the next great emergency to be declared by human authority. Whether that emergency is real or not, the fear is. And fear cancels love, which is the only real danger, so the Christian must not allow that to happen. Right now, you and I must let our faith dominate our fear.

The children of light won't be caught off guard unless we betray our Christian identity by falling back into the godlessness of pagan culture. It was true then and it is true today.

## **Luke**

Jesus' miraculous exorcism of the demon takes place, literally, on the actual Day of the Lord, the Sabbath. Without fanfare, the weekday gospel passages have just moved to Luke, but after all the amazing accounts around the birth of Jesus. We are right into his ministry and the ways people react to him.

While the people were amazed when Jesus cast out the demon, the demon was terrified. The demon is the only one in the synagogue in Capernaum who knows fully who Jesus is and what he is capable of doing.

Isn't it interesting that the demon identifies Jesus exactly the same as Peter did in the gospel two Sundays ago, 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 it does understand who Jesus is.

Jesus used exorcism to demonstrate authority over Satan's kingdom. After being astounded by his words, it says that the people were amazed by this further demonstration of his authority. Apparently, many exorcists recited long incantations and used foul smelling plants to expel demons. But Jesus simply speaks a word and out demonic spirit goes.

The unclean spirit, whatever that is, says: "I know who you are, the Holy One of God." So, the demons know Jesus and they know his authority over them, but they refuse to submit willingly. Again, there is something that is incredibly familiar to us. Many in the world know who God is but refuse to accept him and his authority, even though it is based on love and for our own good.

### **Call to Conversion**

There is always amazement at God's authority. For some that will turn to fear and for others it will turn to joy and confidence. What do we do, as children of the light, to oppose the darkness of fear and hatred? We 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. Even more, it demands of us a reorienting of our entire existence, by submitting to the authority of Christ. 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. Let us be what God has made us for: Children of the Light.

## **Key Scripture Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you. Do not abandon or forsake me.*

**Collect:** *O God, strength of those who hope in you, graciously hear our pleas and, since mortal frailty can do nothing, grant that in following your commands we may please you by our resolve and our deeds.*

**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," then sudden destruction will come upon them, and there will be no escape. 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!"*