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Tuesday's Gospel: Jesus' Secret

Gospel for Tuesday in the 1st Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk* 1:21-28)

And they went into Capernaum; and immediately on the sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, "What have

you to do with us, 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!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.

And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

Commentary

Jesus is in Capernaum, where he preaches and performs miracles. The message he has come to bring is presented with such surprising force

that our Lord quickly acquires widespread fame, leaving those who see and hear him astounded.

On this occasion, they bring him a person possessed by a demon, who recognizes right away that Jesus is the Holy One of God. But our Lord responds with some blunt words: “Be silent, and come out of him.” In Saint Mark’s Gospel we frequently see Jesus’ wish to prevent the “secret” of his true identity from becoming public (cf. M: 1:25.34.44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:24.36; 8:26.30; 9:9).

What was Jesus’ intention in requiring this silence? We can understand this if we remember that the devil from the first moment tried to tempt Jesus with the human outlook of obtaining success through force and spectacle. But our Lord knows that the suffering and humiliation of the Cross is a fundamental part of his mission.

Jesus does not allow himself to be won over by the temptation of the easy way. He knows that if he wants to defeat the devil, he must not be distracted by the attractive flowers along the way. Rather he walks resolutely towards his encounter with the darkness of suffering and death, to show us that even in these adverse circumstances God's light continues to be present and never abandons us.

Today the devil continues to act in the same way and tries by every possible means to distract us from the vocation our Lord has called us to. Once again, Jesus teaches us that we should not dialogue with temptation but cut it off when necessary with a strong "be silent!"

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