

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2021

My beloved brothers and sisters, over the last five Sundays, we have been listening to God's Word to us in the Gospel of St. Mark. Each one of the Gospels tells us the Story of Jesus and our Salvation from a different perspective. St. Mark's Gospel makes this perspective very clear from the outset: Why has Jesus Christ come into the World? Because He has come into the world to proclaim to us the Good News of God, and to call us to change our minds about God, about Salvation and about our purpose in life and our existence! We are called, no less today, than the people of Jesus' time to believe, to stake our lives and our Eternity upon this Good News and upon the Son of God, and to change our lives accordingly. The Good News requires our cooperation and our response!

Jesus, the Son of God, has come into time and place in the Divine Power and the Authority of God to liberate us from the demonic powers, the grip of satan, and the despair of death, by the Good News He proclaims to us. All of the stories in Mark's Gospel are about this reality!

In this story, the four fishermen: Peter, Andrew, James and John are newly called by Jesus. They have just witnessed something utterly amazing: the proclamation of the Gospel in the Power of God in Jesus, and that power at work casting out a demon from a possessed man. In their enthusiasm, the four now bring Jesus to Peter's mother-in-law, for she is sick unto death with a fever; no doubt from Malaria, which was very common near bodies of water. Most people did not survive it. She is dying. Jesus takes her by the hand, and raises her up. The word that is used is the same word for the Resurrection of Jesus. Wanting to avoid notoriety, Jesus then leaves very early in the morning to a deserted place to be alone with His Father in prayer. When they find Him, they tell him everyone is looking for Him; but they are looking for the wrong reasons. They miss the point, the miracles He has worked, point to the truth of the Gospel He teaches, and its liberating power, the reason He came!

This all happens on the beginning of the Sabbath, a new beginning of a new week; and this is no accident. The initiation of Jesus' mission is precisely that, a new beginning of a new time, the Kingdom of God has drawn near us! For the disciples

and for the mother-in-law and for the people who hear and believe; however, it will not be complete until His mission is complete in the Cross and Resurrection!

Jesus tells them He must go out into the world to teach and preach the Gospel and to liberate others from the evil one as well, this is why He came. My beloved brothers and sisters, Jesus still comes to us in our day for the same purpose. The Good News of the Gospel and our acceptance of it in our lives has the same power to liberate us from sin, death and the powers of evil in our time as well. Like the four fishermen, we have a lot to learn from Jesus, but, we are also called to go from our safe-places to evangelize the world around us! We do that by sharing how Jesus has touched our lives. He has touched every single one of you, otherwise, you wouldn't be here today; now, like Peter's mother-in-law, get up, get out and begin to serve!