

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, January 28, 2024
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle B

We encounter in today's Gospel reading a man possessed by an unclean spirit. The central theme of this gospel passage is not merely the exorcism itself but, more importantly, the authority of Jesus. His authority extends beyond teaching; it encompasses power and dominion over the unclean spirits that bind and control us. It is a testament to the power of Christ to cast out demons from our lives, liberating us from the forces that hinder or stifle our spiritual well-being.

The healing miracles performed by Jesus serve as poignant signs of our collective need for healing. Jesus came not just to set the possessed man free but to liberate us all from various evils that afflict, oppress and enslave our lives. He desires to make us whole in mind, body, and soul, bringing us into the fullness of life.

In our modern world, unclean spirits, evil influences, and demons continue to manifest themselves in ways we might not always recognize. The devil often appears in innocent disguises and even attractive temptations. Spiritual fakery is one of his most effective tools, deceiving us and blinding us to the true nature of his influence and deception.

Let me put it this way...With the devil employing spiritual fakery, a focus on material things is masqueraded as good stewardship of our possessions. Loving personal control is disguised as using God-given leadership gifts. Anger is costumed as having a heart for what is right. Self-righteous legalism is presented as loving God's law. Selfish attention-seeking is posed as being candid about your needs. Judgment and criticism are dressed as a commitment to honesty. Gossip is whitewashed as a prayerful concern for others.

In our daily lives, we must discern and confront these 'demons' that may be possessing us. These demons hinder us from becoming the people God intended us to be, damaging our relationships and building walls of fear, envy, and resentment. Perhaps, some of us need a form of spiritual exorcism. We might need to be liberated from the unclean spirit that makes us selfishly believe we can find the "good life" outside of God's plan. Maybe we need to be freed from the spirit that drives us to constantly pursue more, often at the expense of our well-being and relationships. And perhaps, an exorcism is needed to cleanse our hearts of the evil spirit that influences us to misuse power for personal gain.

The Gospel invites us to approach Jesus for liberation. Only he can cast out unclean spirits and fill us with the Holy Spirit, replacing darkness with his divine light. Let us open our hearts to God, allowing him to create a new heart and a right spirit within us.

In prayer, let us surrender ourselves to the Lord Jesus. May he deliver us from every unclean spirit that hinders our relationship with God and others. Let us seek his forgiveness, healing, and transformative love to remove the sins that have invaded our lives.

Open your heart to God and let God create a new heart and spirit within you.