

**Quincy Cursillo
Quincy, Illinois**

**The Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B
January 29, 2012**

**+ Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

Reverend Fathers, Deacons, dear brothers [and sisters] in Christ, after the experience in these days of this Cursillo – of this short course in Christianity – with a renewed faith we can make our own the words of the Psalmist: “Save us, O Lord our God! And gather us from the nations, to give thanks to your holy name, and make it our glory to praise you” (Psalm 106(105):47).

Too often we seek to make a name for ourselves, either to praise it ourselves or to have others praise it. Too put it bluntly: we seek our glory in ourselves. Through our pride, we sometimes seek our happiness in the praise and honor accorded us by others. It may be that in our learning, experience, or wisdom we are tempted to appropriate to ourselves the words of Moses: “A prophet like me will the LORD, your God, raise up for you from among your own kin; to him you shall listen” (Deuteronomy 18:15). Thinking we have the answers we insist others listen to us or do things our way; we turn away from others and in so doing we also turn away from the Lord.

In these moments we neither honor God with our mind nor do we “love everyone in truth of heart (*Collect*).”

We must remember that it is the poor in spirit who will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, not the proud (cf. Matthew 5:3). If we are to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, if we are to attain the happiness for which each of us longs, we must “kneel before the LORD who made us. For he is our God, and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides” (Psalm 95:6-7).

Here before his Eucharistic Presence, we kneel before him using our physical gesture to express the sentiments of our hearts. In the ancient world, the knee symbolized the strength of a man; if a man was struck in the knee, he stumbled and fell. So it is that we bend the knee before God, we bend our strength before him and “bow down in worship” (Psalm 95:6). When we kneel before God not only with our body but also with our heart, we render thanks to his holy name, we honor him with all our mind, and we ask him for the strength to love everyone in truth of heart. In short, we place ourselves in willing service of his Kingdom.

In the Gospel passage proclaimed for us today we heard of the first signs of the coming of his Kingdom. What the Lord announced

only a few verses earlier is made unquestionably clear both in his teaching and in his power over unclean spirits.

What was it in his teaching that so astonished the people? When the scribes taught in the synagogue, they offered their opinions of various texts. Jesus did not teach in this way. He did not offer his opinion, but taught the truth and did so with authority that resided not in traditions and learning but in his very person. Consequently, his teaching uncovered unclean spirits who sensed in him their impending doom.

When the unclean spirits revealed Jesus' true identity which he did not wish yet to be made known lest he be misunderstood, he commanded the unclean spirits, "Quiet" (Mark 1:25)! In the original Greek, his command is even more authoritative: "Be muzzled," he orders. He will not tolerate the attempts of the unclean spirits to thwart his mission. Powerless before the Lord, the unclean spirits came out of the man (cf. Mark 1:26). The very word of Jesus has the power to accomplish itself; this is why everyone was amazed: nothing like this had been seen before (cf. Mark 1:27).

The fame of the Lord has spread even to our own time these many centuries later and these many miles away, and the power of

his words has not weakened. His power is not weakened because he is the one whom the Lord God raised up like Moses; it is to him that we must listen, in all ways and in everything.

Even today the words and teachings of Jesus astonish us because through them he reveals our sin and the unclean spirits who continually do battle with his Kingdom and seek to claim us as their captives. When we hear his voice drawing our attention to our sins we must not harden our hearts but must instead kneel before the Lord in the Sacrament of Penance. When we do so as a regular part of our discipleship and when we are nourished every Sunday and holy day by his Body and Blood, we are strengthened in this battle who is victory is already won.

My friends, what happened in that synagogue in Capernaum has also happened to us in these recent days: “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light; on those who dwelling in a land overshadowed by death, light has arisen” (Matthew 4:16).

Soon we will approach the altar of the Lord. As we do so, let us offer ourselves to him together with our gifts of bread and wine. In doing so, as our faith increases through the reception of the Eucharist so might we allow the light of the Lord to shine through

us before everyone we might. If we do so, we will not bring glory to our own names; rather we will give glory to the name of the Lord who saves us.

May God give us this grace. Amen.