

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES
January 31, 2021
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Deuteronomy 18:15–20 + 1 Corinthians 7:32–35 + Mark 1:21–28



Reflection by: Sister Gina Scaringella, OP

Mark tells us in today's Gospel that the people who saw and heard Jesus were astonished and amazed—at both the authority of Jesus' teaching and his power over the unclean spirit. But did Jesus of Nazareth ever show the slightest thirst for authority or power? No. It may be hard for us to imagine indifference to such coveted influences—but the only authority ever to impel Jesus was love. Love authorized his every act of healing, teaching, and forgiving.

A few Sundays ago, the Gospel told of Jesus' baptism. Jesus heard God's words as the Spirit rushed upon him: "You are my beloved." Ron Rolheiser, OMI, says that Jesus saw everything through the eyes of one who was beloved. The experience of God's love filled Jesus' vision and motivated every astonishing work that he did.

We, the baptized, are also God's beloved. We've been initiated into the same love that claimed Jesus. Yet we keep chasing things that ultimately cannot satisfy: authority...power...excess. Worse, we may unwittingly do so at the expense of those who lack the basics.

Still, we remain God's beloved, no matter what. When this blessed reality finally fills our vision as it did for Jesus, it will impel us to live as he did. We, too, will be healers, teachers, forgivers. Under love's authority, our unclean spirits will have no choice but to depart. And it will be amazing!