

**Mission to Drive Away Evil** Twenty-second Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday,  
September 2, 2014 8:15 AM **1 Cor 2:10b-16; Lk 4:31-37** (We can learn very simply  
by following Christ, by seeking the discernment of the Spirit, by being confident that evil and  
distress and anxiety cannot rule over us.)

**“And they were all amazed and said to one another, ‘What is there about his word?’”**

This is a good question. People are asking questions, “What is there about his word? He speaks with authority, not like the scribes. He isn’t repeating what someone else said. He is speaking from the Spirit within him. **“With authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.”**

Actually this is one of the most important aspects of Jesus’ entire mission and ministry. It was delivering people from evil. That goes hand-in-hand with declaring the kingdom of God. **The kingdom of God is the power of God that belongs in human hearts, belongs in human relationships, but which has been expelled by sin.** By not cooperating with God, human beings have shoved God’s reign, God’s kingdom, away from themselves. What they have left is something all out of order, riven by violence and all the capital sins: greed, lust, pride, envy, gluttony. **All these disorders become standard.** Addiction becomes standard. Why? **Because the reign of God has been shoved away.** And Jesus comes to bring the reign of God into the hearts of people, into the relationships with people. And that means **removing the unclean spirits that in many ways possess, obsess, and oppress people.** So in a way it’s job number one: **clean up the mess, then fill in the Holy Spirit.**

Jesus sent out his disciples to do as he had done, and so we have to understand **we also have this mission and this power to clean up the mess, to send evil away.** St. Paul says in the first reading, **“You have the mind of Christ.”** He could have also said you have the power of Christ. We do not understand **the great plan God has for us in which we are already incorporated.** But that is the meaning of our **Baptism.** We have already been incorporated into this kingdom of God. We already have a new identity. A new identity is belonging to God. It is a new birth and it’s a new birth that is not only parallel to our own being born into the world—now we are born into the kingdom of God—but it’s another

rebirth also of God's people of Israel. Just as at the Jordan River they pass for the first time through that river into the promised land, so through Baptism the Church passes through this new land, this new place, which is not geographical, this place of **being with God, living in God, being of the mind of God, and having this mission to continue to drive away evil from the world.**

And this is a very great power, but it **needs to be focused.** We can see that in so many ways God's people are like, well, they are like God's people at the time of Christ. They are "like sheep without a shepherd." **They don't know how to harness this power they have been given** and they don't know how to focus this ministry that they share in, that **we can learn very simply by following Christ, by seeking the discernment of the Spirit, by being confident that evil and distress and anxiety cannot rule over us.** We have a right to peace in Christ. We have a right to justice in Christ. And we have an obligation to try to bring this about in the greater part of the world.

**It is a very formidable task.** We should never belittle it. We should not belittle the effects and the power of evil. We shouldn't praise it either, or exaggerate it; but we shouldn't belittle it. We have a very sober mission. We need to be supported every day. **We need to allow God to support us by giving enough time to prayer. And we need to follow the little guides that we receive throughout our day. These little graces, we need to follow through on them.**