

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Signs that Accompany God's Work St. Mark, evangelist Monday, April 25, 2016
8:15 AM 1 Pt 5:5b-14; Mk 16:15-20 (It is always Christ that brings people to the
Father. He uses various means.)

“But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.”

This particular gospel makes it very clear that **Jesus is the one who continues to preach.** He uses his apostles, the eleven, to go forth, but he works through them. It's he who is doing the working. This is sometimes something people forget. **It is always Christ that brings people to the Father.** In his life on earth and in his exultation he continues to bring people to the Father. **He uses the Church. He uses the apostles. He uses various means, but it's always he who does it.**

And he does this by bringing people into relationships. The Church itself is a network of relationships. That's why the first reading from Peter talks about how we have to build it up with—what? **What is the quality that is most important in building up our relationships? Humility.** He says, **“Stay sober and alert.”** What does “sober” mean? It means aware in the true sense; it's be aware of oneself. In “truth” means to be humble. To think of oneself in a proud way is actually a form of intoxication. It is the intoxication of the world. That's why he says, **“Stay sober and alert.” Don't be intoxicated by the mindset of the world around you in which each is striving to be number one,** each is promoting oneself. But strive rather to be humble and to be sober. **To be sober is to be truly aware and free of intoxication from the world around us. That way we can allow the Holy Spirit to build us up in our relationships with one another.** And there lies the strength and the sign of the presence of God, and the power.

You see the different things. **Jesus says, “In my name you will drive out demons.”** Where does that come from? **That comes from the relationships that we have with one another and**

God, how God dwells in our relationships and empowers us and protects us from evil and pushes evil out of others through the presence of the Spirit in our midst. “They will speak new languages,” in fact, all languages eventually, and not only new languages, but they will **speak with new meaning.** A meaning doesn’t come from culture or from just the way people look at the world, but it comes from some other source: **the mind of God itself, the heart of the Father**—so new languages and new meaning. **“They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover”** These are manifestations that accompany the work of God. They are not really our work; they are God’s work. And in some cases we have to recover them in order to be that authentic sign.