

**Reflection on the Gospel-4th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B
(Mark 1:21-28)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Today's gospel reading recounts the first episode in a section of Mark's gospel that focusses on a typical day in the ministry of Jesus as authoritative teacher and prophetic healer (1:21-38). Jesus comes with his disciples to Capernaum. On the Sabbath day, Judaism's holy day, he goes into the synagogue, Judaism's local gathering place, and preaches. The verbal forms in the first sentence indicate that teaching in the synagogue was part of his customary activity. Jesus is thus located firmly within Israel's prophetic tradition of mediating God's word.

In today's first reading from Deuteronomy (18:15-20), the term "prophet" appears eight times. Moses tells the people that God will respond to their request at Sinai (Horeb) and raise up from among them a prophet like himself, a mediator between God and God's people, one who will speak God's word. Prophets do not appoint or authorise themselves: God calls and authorises the prophets to speak God's word. Failure to heed the prophets carries its own consequences as does the attempt to assume a prophetic role without God's authorisation. Just as the prophets of old speak the authentic word of God only when they are authorised by the God of Israel, so Jesus of Nazareth, later to identify himself in this gospel as God's prophet (6:4), speaks and acts "with authority". In other words, he speaks with the authority of the God of Israel.

In this first Markan story of his divinely authorised activity, Jesus is approached by a man "with an unclean spirit". The man's loud scream sets up a confrontation between the power of God, mediated through Jesus, and the forces of destruction that often take hold of human lives. Jesus silences and expels these destructive forces and thus renders a seriously troubled person whole. Confounding the unclean spirit(s) brings social and communal benefits to the troubled person as well as physical and emotional healing.

God's reign or empire is made real through a healing action that is perceived as "a new teaching". No word of Jesus' teaching is reported, only his actions. Those actions are presented as "teaching". We teach by who we are and what we do. For Jesus, as for his disciples, congruence between words and actions is integral to authentic gospel proclamation.

Jesus is demonstrating to his newly formed group of followers that the gospel they are to proclaim is grounded in the ordinary struggles of ordinary people. This gospel carries the power to lift the burdens and restore the troubled to wholeness and health. We may wish to identify the "unclean spirits" that take hold of us from time to time so that we can open ourselves to the power of God mediated through God's teacher-healers in our time.

4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—YEAR B



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong
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**MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
MONDAY, 29TH JANUARY 2018**

MONDAY: No Mass
TUESDAY: 5.00 pm in Mercy Centre
WEDNESDAY: 11.00 am in Mercy Centre
THURSDAY: 9.30 am in Parish Church
FRIDAY: 9.30 am in Parish Church

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	9.00 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	10.30 AM

5th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—YEAR B

READINGS First: Job 7:1-4,6-7
Second: 1 Corinthians 9:16-19,22-23
Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

ANNIVERSARIES: Margaret Anne Quinn, Frances Murphy.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson, Carmel Doherty, Pauline Murphy, Maria Wilson, Noreen Mullane, Aurora Ferrer.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 11:** E. Kennedy ©, C. Stewart.

Next Week: **Team 12:** K. Bevelander ©, M. Liston, G. Maguire.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,415.20
	Loose:	\$ 300.00
	Credit Cards:	\$ 6,867.00
	Direct Debits:	\$ 445.00
		\$ 9,027.20
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 714.00



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK FLAG EVENT

You are invited to the Ballarat Interfaith Network's flag raising event in celebration of *World Interfaith Harmony Week*, in partnership with Ballarat City Council, on **Monday, 5th February, at 11.00 am** in the Queen Victoria Square in front of the Town Hall Sturt Street median strip. Indigenous acknowledgment of country and didgeridoo playing, Mayoral address, Baha'l keynote speaker, St Alipius PS Choir, flag raising and refreshments.

PROCLAIM CONFERENCE 2018—SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Diocesan Foundation has offered sponsorship for six people from the diocese to attend the PROCLAIM 2018 CONFERENCE in Brisbane from July 12-14 (www.proclaimconference.com.au). Further information is available on the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au. Applications close 16th February, 2018.

RITE OF ELECTION

The *Rite of Election* is an important part of the process of a person's journey to full membership in the Catholic Church community and one which is greatly appreciated by all who participate. This applies to both adults and children of catechetical age. The Rite of Election for catechumens, candidates and children of catechetical age will take place on **Saturday, 17th February at 12.30 pm** in St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat. The presider will be Bishop Paul Bird CSsR. At the conclusion of the ceremony all are invited to join the Bishop in St Patrick's Hall for a light lunch. For further information contact the Pastoral Ministry Office on 5337-7159 or email pastoralministry@ballarat.catholic.org.au.

BISHOP PAUL'S PARISH VISITATION

Bishop Paul will be visiting our parish as part of his Diocesan Visitation Programme from **March 2nd to 5th** which will include visits to the schools of St Alipius, St Francis Xavier, Emmaus and Damascus. He will celebrate the weekend Masses and meet and greet parishioners. More details later.

MASS OF THE OILS

The *Mass of the Oils* will be celebrated in St Patrick's Cathedral at **6.30 pm on Monday, 26th March**. This Mass is a celebration of the whole Church of the Diocese of Ballarat. We celebrate the unity and ministry of the ordained priests in the midst of the entire priestly people of God of the Diocese. This Mass also has special significance for those who will use the blessed oils in 2018—the sick, those to be baptised and confirmed. All members of the Diocese are invited to participate in this celebration which truly expresses the unity of the Diocesan Church. Ministries required for the Mass of the Oils include Ushers, Readers, Oils Bearers, Presentation of the gifts, Collection of Oils, Musicians and Singers. For further information contact the Pastoral Ministry Office, phone 5337-7159 or email pastoralministry@ballarat.catholic.org.au.

PALMS AUSTRALIA ENCOUNTERS

Share meals share games, share life stories.

Have the back-to-work blues got you thinking about your next trip overseas? If so, why not join us on an intimate, authentic tour of **Timor-Leste** this March?

Palms Encounters are ethically run group tours that provide participants with authentic, hard to come by experiences. The tours have been carefully designed to give you an insight into the daily life of people of another culture, an understanding of sustainable approaches to reducing poverty, and an insight into the life and work of Palms development volunteers.

Palms Australia Encounters in 2018:

11 - 23 March	Timor Leste
18 - 30 May	Samoa
20 May - 1 June	Timor Leste
2 - 14 September	Timor Leste

Limited places still available on our **March Encounter to Timor Leste!**

If you would like to join us for this incredible experience, please contact Palms on (02) 9560 5333 or go to www.palms.org.au/encounters.