



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS *ANGELUS* Library of the Apostolic Palace

Sunday, 31 January 2021 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Buongiorno !

Today's Gospel passage (cf. *Mk* 1:21-28) tells of a typical day in Jesus' ministry; in particular, it is the Sabbath, a day dedicated to rest and prayer: people went to the synagogue. In the synagogue of Capernaum, Jesus reads and comments on the Scriptures. Those present are attracted by his manner of speaking; their astonishment is great because he shows an authority that is different to that of the scribes (v. 22). Furthermore, Jesus shows himself to be powerful in his deeds as well. Indeed, a man of the synagogue lashes out, addressing him as the One sent by God: He recognizes the evil spirit, orders him to leave that man, and thus drives him out (vv. 23-26).

The two characteristic elements of Jesus' action can be seen here: *preaching*, and the *thaumaturgic work* of healing: He preaches and heals. Both of these aspects stand out in the passage of the evangelist Mark, but preaching is emphasized the most; exorcism is presented as a confirmation of his singular "authority" and his teaching. Jesus preaches with his own authority, as someone who possesses a doctrine derived from himself, and not like the scribes who repeated previous traditions and laws that had been handed down. They repeated words, words, words, only words: as the great singer Mina sang, [*"Parole, parole, parole"*]; that is how they were. Just words. Instead in Jesus' words have authority; Jesus is authoritative. And this touches the heart.

Jesus' teaching has the same authority as God who speaks. Indeed, with a single command he easily frees the possessed man from the evil one, and heals him. Why? Because his word does what he says. Because he is the definitive prophet. But why do I say this, that he is the definitive prophet? Let us remember Moses' promise: Moses says, "After me, long after, a prophet like me will come" — like me! — "who will teach you". (cf. *Dt* 18:15). Moses proclaimed Jesus as the definitive prophet. This is why he speaks not with human, but with divine authority, because he

has the power to be the definitive prophet, that is, the Son of God who saves us, who heals us all.

The second aspect, healing, shows that Christ's preaching is intended to defeat the evil present in humankind and the world. His word is pointedly directed against the kingdom of Satan: it puts him in crisis and makes him recoil, obliging him to leave the world. Touched by the Lord's command, this possessed, maniacal man is freed and transformed into a new person. In addition, Jesus' preaching conforms to a logic that is contrary to that of the world and of the evil one: His words reveal the upheaval of a mistaken ordering of things. In fact, the demon present in the possessed man cries out as Jesus approaches: "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" (v. 24).

These expressions indicate the total extraneousness between Jesus and Satan: they are on completely different planes; there is nothing in common between them; they are the opposite of each other. Jesus, authoritative, who attracts people by his authority, and also the prophet who liberates, the promised prophet who is the Son of God who heals. Do we listen to Jesus' words, which are authoritative? Always, do not forget, carry a small copy of the Gospel in your pocket or in your bag, to read throughout the day, to listen to that authoritative word of Jesus. And then, we all have problems, we all have our sins, we all have spiritual afflictions; let us ask Jesus: "Jesus, you are the prophet, the Son of God, the one who was promised to us to heal us. Heal me!" Asking Jesus to heal our sins, our ills.

The Virgin Mary always kept Jesus' words and deeds in her heart, and followed him with complete availability and faithfulness. May she help us too to listen to him and follow him, to experience the signs of his salvation in our lives.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, the day after tomorrow, 2 February, we will celebrate the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, when Simeon and Anna, both elderly, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, recognized Jesus as the Messiah. The Holy Spirit still stirs up thoughts and words of wisdom in the elderly today: their voice is precious because it sings the praises of God and safeguards the roots of peoples. They remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between generations, passing on the experience of life and faith to the young. Grandparents are often forgotten and we forget this wealth of preserving roots and passing on.

This is why, I have decided to establish *World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*, which will be held throughout the Church every year on the fourth Sunday of July, close to the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, Jesus' "grandparents". It is important for grandparents to meet their grandchildren and for grandchildren to meet their grandparents, because — as the prophet Joel says — grandparents, before their grandchildren, will dream, and have illusions [great desires],

and young people, taking strength from their grandparents, will go forward and prophesy. And 2 February is indeed the feast of the encounter between grandparents and their grandchildren.

Today we celebrate World Leprosy Day, initiated more than 60 years ago by Raoul Follereau and continued especially by the associations inspired by his humanitarian work. I express my closeness to those who suffer from this disease, and I encourage the missionaries, healthcare workers and volunteers who are engaged in their service. The pandemic has confirmed how vital it is to protect the right to health for the most fragile people: I hope that the leaders of nations will unite their efforts to treat those suffering from Hansen's disease and to ensure their social inclusion.

And I affectionately greet the boys and girls of Catholic Action of this diocese of Rome — some of them are here —, gathered safely in their parishes or connected online, on the occasion of the Caravan of Peace. Despite the health emergency, this year too, with the help of parents and educators and assisting priests, they have organized this wonderful initiative. They are going ahead with the initiatives, well done, bravo to you! Keep up the good work! Bravo to all of you, thank you. And now let us listen together to the message that some of them here beside us will read, on behalf of all.

[Reading of the Message]

Normally, these young people would bring balloons to cast into the air from the window, but today we're locked in here, so it won't be possible. But next year you will certainly do it!

I extend my cordial greetings to all of you who are connected through the various media. I wish you all a happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*