

JANUARY 28, 2018



FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



DEUTERONOMY 18:15-20

PSALM 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9

1 CORINTHIANS 7:32-35

MARK 1:21-28

REFLECTION

A group of eighth grade girls ruled the small Catholic school I attended growing up. As a fifth grader, I was already pretty low on the social totem pole. I was awkward, had braces and stringy hair, and was always a year or two behind in the fashion department. That squad of eighth graders taunted me mercilessly under the leadership of a girl named Anna. They would snicker to each other behind their hands whenever they passed me in the hallway or lunchroom. They would go out of their way to find something they could mock me about. I wasn't sure what I had done to deserve their ridicule. I just knew that I was a target. My family went to Mass every Sunday. We always sat in the third pew from the front on the far right side of the church next to the choir. From there, I would often watch everyone walk up for Communion. I remember being filled with a deep sense of anger as the eighth grade girls passed me on their way to receive the Eucharist. During the week, they were so cruel to me, but when Sunday came around, they acted like perfect angels.

In today's Gospel, Jesus cures a demoniac. When the man sees Jesus, the unclean spirit in him cries out, "I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" (v. 24). The unclean spirit knows exactly who Jesus is. In fact, it is probably able to articulate Jesus' identity better than many of the disciples could. But simply knowing who Jesus is does not necessarily mean that you are following him. The unclean spirit certainly wasn't! One of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, refers to the Eucharist as "the source and summit of the christian life" (11). This means that while the Eucharist is the ultimate sacrament of God's love for us (the summit), it also gives us the strength and inspiration we need (the source) to live out our love for God and for others as Jesus did. As Catholics, gathering to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist each Sunday is a central part of our faith. If we don't take the example of Christ with us when we leave the church, we are saying Amen to the Body and Blood of Christ, but not to our call to be the Body of Christ in the world. We are like the unclean spirit who recognizes Christ, but does not follow him. Isn't that missing the whole point?

ACTION

Think of one thing you can do to take the Eucharist with you when you leave Mass this Sunday, whether it's treating someone with kindness, giving to a charity, or repairing a broken relationship.



JOURNALING QUESTION



● Is there a situation in your life where you need the strength and inspiration of the Eucharist?