

*Readings*

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23

Mark 1:29-39

---

Liam T. O'Doherty, O.S.A.  
*Church of St. Augustine*  
*Troy, New York*

Allow me to put this Gospel reading in context:

We are still only in the first few weeks of Jesus' public ministry.

Outside of Capernaum and a few other towns, He is unknown.

Even in Capernaum, people are just getting to know His message and His power. He still has only four disciples.

This one day is very eventful in the early public ministry of Jesus.

The day can be divided into three periods of time in three different places:

- In last Sunday's Gospel, we heard about how, on the morning of this same day, Jesus healed the man possessed by a demon in the synagogue.

- In the afternoon, Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law in Peter's home.

- In the evening, all the people of the town brought their sick and possessed relatives and friends to the door of Peter's house, where Jesus came outside and healed them.

Now, what does this have to do with us in 2024? I think this tells us something about where Jesus wants to use His love and power to heal and make us whole: 1. in our **houses of worship** (for us, that would be our **churches** instead of the synagogue), 2. in our **homes** and our **families** (just as in Peter's home and family), and 3. in our **neighborhoods** (just as Jesus healed all the people who were brought to the door of Peter's house that evening).

**First**, we saw last week that on the morning of this Sabbath day, Jesus worked powerfully in that synagogue, in that house of worship, to heal the man who was possessed by a demon (whatever that might have meant). When we come to Church, our house of worship, on Sunday, we need to have the hope and the expectation that Jesus will work in our lives to heal us and make us whole.

There are many ways in which Jesus does this in Church at Mass:

One of the ways Jesus works is through the Body of Christ, which is the Church – the Christian community. St. Paul tells us that the community of the Church is the body of Christ, and Christ’s love and grace flow through it from one member to the other just as blood flows through our veins from one part of our body to the other.

At Mass, Jesus works in our hearts to heal and make us whole through His Holy Word. Jesus gives us the wisdom of God, healing, and consolation; he gives us words of guidance, and he gives us power through His Holy Word. We need to listen to the Word of God with the expectation and the hope that through that Word, he can touch our hearts in a healing and transforming way.

Jesus also works in our bodies and our spirits through the **Holy Eucharist** to bring us healing and wholeness. Under the appearances of bread and wine, we receive Jesus’ body and soul into our own bodies and souls. In the intimacy of that Holy Communion, we can tell Jesus our worries, our fears, our doubts – even our complaints! – and we know that he will hear them all. In that precious time we have with Jesus, we can express our thanks and joy to him and know He will accept them.

**The second place is the home!** Just as Jesus worked powerfully in the home and with the family of Peter, healing his mother-in-law, Jesus can work in our own homes and in our own families. Especially if we endeavor to make Jesus welcome there.

There is no doubt that the time constraints and the pressures on modern families are very significant. But if we take the time to endeavor to establish a faith-filled environment in our homes,

especially if we make the effort to welcome Jesus into our families by trying to pray together, I have no doubt that Jesus will work powerfully in our families to heal relationships and help them to grow and become strong and healthy.

**And the third place is the neighborhood.** Just as Jesus on the evening of that day stood outside the door to Peter's house and healed and made whole the sick and the possessed of that town, Jesus desires to work in our society, perhaps through you, to bring healing to our neighborhoods, to our workplaces, and society in general. Jesus works through your warmth, kindness, and generosity toward others.

Brothers and sisters, we know that Jesus desires to work with power in our hearts to give us His grace, His peace, His guidance, and His love. Let's invite him to do so today. We believe that in doing so, we will be more deeply aware of Jesus' constant presence with us in those three places: our *parish community*, our *homes and families*, and our *neighborhoods and society in general*. Let us open our hearts to him to receive His grace of healing and wholeness and share that grace with others.