

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Save us, O Lord our God!
And gather us from the nations,
to give thanks to your holy name,
and make it our glory to praise you.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Grant us, Lord our God,
that we may honour you with all our mind,
and love everyone in truth of heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 18.15-20

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Moses said to the people:
"Your God will raise up for you a prophet like
myself, from among yourselves, from your
own brothers; to him you must listen. This is
what you yourselves asked of the Lord your
God at Horeb on the day of the Assembly. 'Do
not let me hear again' you said 'the voice
of the Lord my God, nor look any longer on
this great fire, or I shall die'; and the Lord said
to me, 'All they have spoken is well said. I
will raise up a prophet like yourself for them
from their own brothers; I will put my words
into his mouth and he shall tell them all I
command him. The man who does not listen
to my words that he speaks in my name,
shall be held answerable to me for it. But the
prophet who presumes to say in my name a
thing I have not commanded him to say, or
who speaks in the name of other gods, that
prophet shall die'."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 94

Response:

O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.

- O Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord. (R.)

- Come in; let us kneel and bend low;
let us kneel before the God who made us
for he is our God and we the people who
belong to his pasture,
the flock that is led by his hand. (R.)

- O that today you would listen to his
voice!
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your fathers put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my
work. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Corinthians.

I would like to see you free from all worry.
An unmarried man can devote himself to
the Lord's affairs, all he need worry about is
pleasing the Lord; but a married man has to
bother about the world's affairs and devote
himself to pleasing his wife: he is torn two
ways. In the same way an unmarried woman,
like a young girl, can devote herself to the
Lord's affairs; all she need worry about is
being holy in body and spirit. The married
woman, on the other hand, has to worry
about the world's affairs and devote herself to
pleasing her husband. I say this only to help
you, not to put a halter round your necks, but
simply to make sure that everything is as it
should be, and that you give your undivided
attention to the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mk 1:21-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Mark.

They went as far as Capernaum, and as
soon as the sabbath came Jesus went to
the synagogue and began to teach. And his
teaching made a deep impression on them
because, unlike the scribes, he taught them
with authority.

In their synagogue just then there was a
man possessed by an unclean spirit, and it
shouted, "What do you want with us, Jesus
of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I
know who you are: the Holy One of God." But
Jesus said sharply, "Be quiet! Come out of
him!" And the unclean spirit threw the man
into convulsions and with a loud cry went
out of him. The people were so astonished
that they started asking each other what it
all meant. "Here is a teaching that is new"
they said "and with authority behind it: he
gives orders even to unclean spirits and they
obey him." And his reputation rapidly spread
everywhere, through all the surrounding
Galilean countryside.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

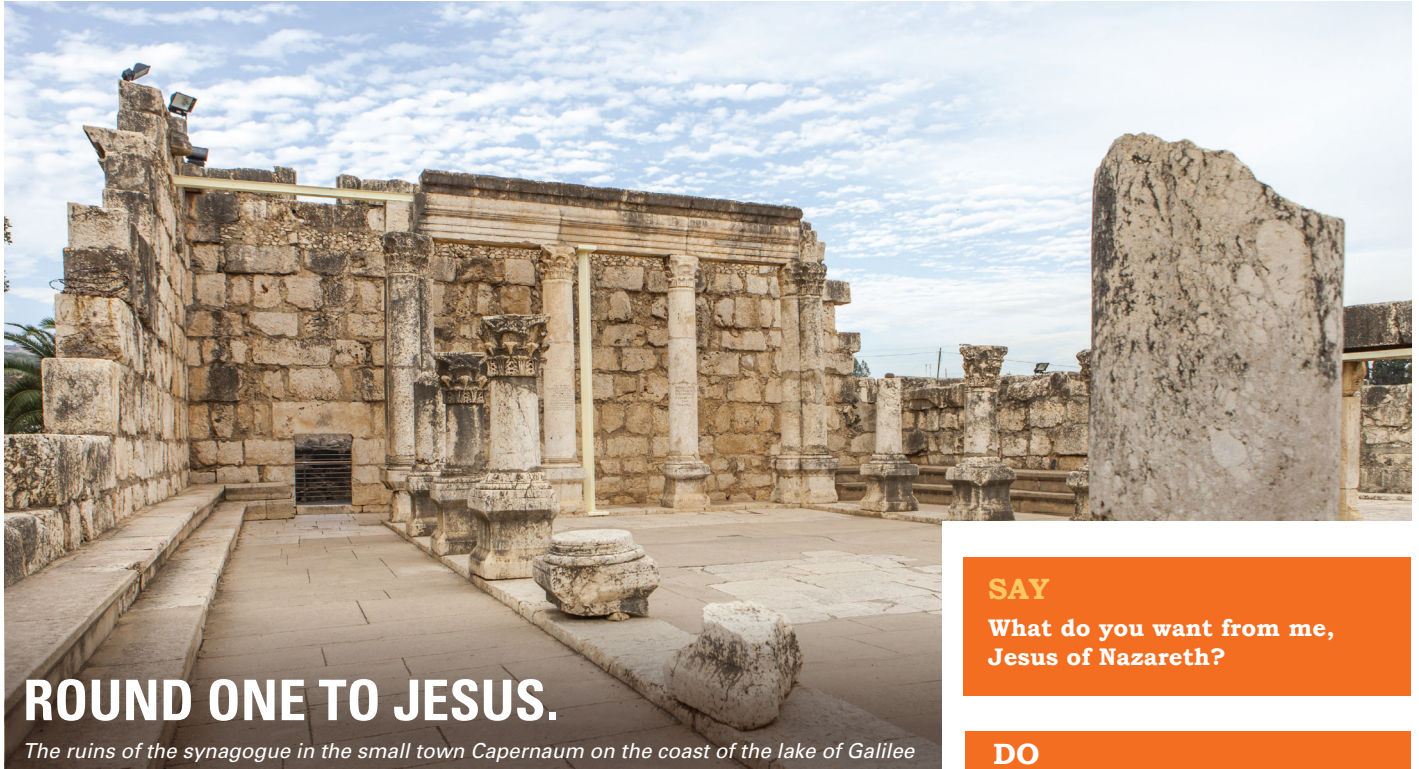
O Lord, we bring to your altar
these offerings of our service:
be pleased to receive them, we pray,
and transform them
into the Sacrament of our redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Let your face shine on your servant.
Save me in your merciful love.
O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I
call on you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished by these redeeming gifts,
we pray, O Lord,
that through this help to eternal salvation
true faith may ever increase.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



ROUND ONE TO JESUS.

The ruins of the synagogue in the small town Capernaum on the coast of the lake of Galilee

Capernaum, a town on the shore of the Sea of Galilee becomes the base for Jesus' activity of preaching and healing.

The synagogue there is the setting for the first public act in Jesus' ministry. It is not clear what the actual nature of the *unclean spirit* is, but it is clearly opposed to Jesus, *the Holy One of God*. It is a feature of Mark's narrative that only spirits, not human beings, perceive accurately who Jesus really is. The idea of *holy* means someone or something consecrated to God or closely associated with the Lord. It suggests life, wholeness and completeness: in this sense, a person or object is *clean*. *Unclean* suggests the opposite, something which is out of place or incomplete. In this sense there is the kingdom of God, which is holy, and the realm of the demonic, which is unclean. In this story, Jesus' authority, which people have recognized in his teaching, is more powerful than the demon. Jesus heals the possessed person simply by his word, not by touch or any other ritual action. Mark will show that Jesus has authority over any power which threatens human life: this is an instance of how he is greater than spiritual forces opposed to the kingdom of God. Jesus has already been tested and has withstood the attack of the devil in the wilderness. His word has been sufficient for people to abandon their occupations to follow him. His authority is greater than that of the scribes. This opening scene sets the tone for the rest of the gospel narrative. ■

REFLECT

We may be tempted to dismiss this story as one belonging to an ancient, superstitious culture. Indeed, a pre-scientific age did tend to ascribe apparently inexplicable happenings to the work of malign spirits. Also, people who suffered from conditions that we would now say are due to physical conditions such as epilepsy or some kind of mental illness were regarded as being possessed by demons, and exorcisms were common. But few

people today would say that we are not subject to forces beyond our control: we are all affected by economic and political realities of one kind or another. Evil exists in our world, whether we believe in a personal devil or not. There are forces built into the way our societies function which can be described as *sinful*, these are called *structural sin*, which keep people in situations of poverty, despair and injustice. The Gospels present Jesus as bringing the authority of the Kingdom to bear on forces which threaten or diminish human life, and we usually

SAY

What do you want from me, Jesus of Nazareth?

DO

Get involved in some project in your local area to address some pressing social need. Help to make a miracle happen.

LEARN

Capernaum is a town on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Another name for the Sea of Galilee is the Lake of Gennesareth.

In Mark's gospel, transcendent, spiritual forces recognize Jesus for who he really is.

In the world in which the gospels were written, malign or evil spirits were usually held responsible for events or illnesses which people could not explain.

describe these acts of power as *miracles*. Sometimes we say that it would take a miracle to sort out some of the problems which face our community or society: perhaps the gospel stories such as the one we have been thinking about today are intended to encourage us not simply to hope and believe that something indeed *can* be done, but that, as disciples of Jesus, perhaps we can do something to bring the Kingdom values of justice and peace to bear on such situations. Perhaps a miracle can happen. ■