

ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC
STUDENT CENTER
@ ISU



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Director: Jennifer Seach

Sunday, January 29th, 2012
4th Sunday in Ordinary time

Communion Service

In today's gospel from Mark, we have what appears to be an exorcism. Jesus enters the synagogue in Capernaum, a fishing town on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus called many of his apostles. In Synagogues, there was not a designated preacher. They were gathering places for the faithful to come together, and study the law and receive religious instruction. People would read scripture and discuss. Anyone (male) could come forward to teach, and people would listen, according to what impact his teaching had. Certainly no one would expect a carpenter to have nearly as much to say as one of the scribes; however, Jesus' listeners say, He speaks as one with authority and not as the scribes.

The scribes would be a varied group: priests, lawyers (Hebrew religious law), writers, teachers, administrators. Scribes are most associated with Jerusalem, and they are among Jesus' fiercest opponents. It is the Jerusalem scribes with the elders and chief priests who have Jesus condemned to death, and we see part of the reason for that opposition here at the very beginning of his teaching. The scribes aren't even present in this scene, but the people who listen to Jesus, say this, this is authority. Not like the scribes. They compare Jesus favorably to those who are supposed to be religious authorities, which those authorities could not have liked. The people in the synagogue of Capernaum are opposing Jesus' wisdom and the power of his charisma and his words with that of the people who are supposed to be in charge, but rule through position rather than their own character or authority. People have assumed that what they say is wise just because it is the scribes who say it. People listen to them because they're scribes and not necessarily because they had anything good to say, and Jesus' listeners realize that here. It's an important insight but not one that any religious leader would want to allow.

People were astonished, and this is typical of Mark's gospel especially. One of its most salient characteristics is surprise, wonder, awe, fear. This comes in response to his teachings and his miracles. His opponents respond with shock and fear and so do his disciples.

Then, as Jesus teaches, a man with an unclean spirit approaches and screams at him. He says what have you to do with us. Then the man with the unclean spirit calls Jesus the Holy One of God, the only time this title is used in Mark (and only a few other times in the gospels at all). It's a great irony of Mark that this unclean spirit recognizes him and calls him by such an exalted title, when no one else does. It's also very typical of the Gospel of Mark. In this gospel, widely agreed by scholars to have been the first to be written, ca 70 CE, no one ever gets Jesus.

It's a difficult Gospel, heartbreaking even, where Jesus is continually disappointed and misunderstood. Jesus says he is to die, and his disciples argue about who will sit at his right hand. Jesus tells them to stay awake while he prays in the garden at Gethsemane, and they fall asleep not once as in Luke, but three times. In Mark's description of the passion, there is no friendly thief on the cross next to him, instead Mark says that "the two who were crucified with Jesus insulted him also" (15:32). The unclean spirit recognizes Jesus though and calls him by title.

Jesus says "Be quiet! Leave this man!". The spirit throws convulsions, showing both its reluctance to leave the man but also the absolute irresistible authority of Jesus, and it then departs. Again people were astonished. They say "What happened here? It is a new kind of teaching- with authority", just as earlier, when he preached people were astonished and said he teaches with authority. This miracle is further evidence of that preaching with authority. It's not a story about demons or exorcism; it's a story about the authority of Jesus and his teaching, against which nothing can stand.


Peace, Jennifer



St. John's & Catholic Relief Services presents...

“The Dark Side of Chocolate”

Thursday, February 9th, 7pm in the Bengal Café (SUB)
Discussion, chocolate sale, and raffle to follow
Gather your friends and come get informed about
Fair Trade!



Anyone interested in Confirmation or Marriage
Prep speak with Jennifer

WEEKLY EVENTS:

Applied Catholicism - Tuesdays 7pm with dinner

Grilled Cheese Wednesdays - 11:30am - 1pm

Bible Study- Thursdays 7pm in our library



UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 8: Student Organization Fair - Sign up in the lobby!

Feb. 9: CRS Movie “The Dark Side of Chocolate” -

Bengal Café, 7pm, with discussion, chocolate sale, and raffle

Feb. 10: Iron Chef Night

Feb. 22: Ash Wednesday - 12:05pm service

Mar. 9: Fish Fry Fundraiser

St John's Student Center is NOT part of Holy Spirit or any other parish. It is entirely independent to best serve the students of ISU. Please make donations to “St John's”, and thank you for your support of this vital ministry.

Contributions for January 22, 2012 = \$189.92 *Thank you!*

“The Dark Side of Chocolate”

Thursday, February 9th, 7pm. Bengal Café in the SUB.

Summary:

“Is the chocolate we eat produced with the use of child labour and trafficked children? The award winning Danish journalist Miki Mistrati decides to investigate the rumours.

His hunt for answers brings him to Mali in West Africa, where hidden footage reveals illegal trafficking of small children to the cocoa fields in neighbouring Ivory Coast. Kids as young as seven years old work illegal in the plantations where they face a dangerous job cutting down the cocoa and carrying heavy loads. Some are victims of trafficking and most of the kids are never paid.

The West African country of Ivory coast is the world’s largest producer of cocoa with more than 40 percent of the world’s production.

Companies like Nestle, Barry Callebaut and Mars signed the Cocoa Protocol in 2001 promising to work for a total eradication of child labour in the cocoa sector by 2008.

Does your favorite chocolate have a bitter taste? Follow Miki Mistrati into the bush of Africa to expose: **The Dark Side of Chocolate.** thedarksideofchocolate.org

Discussion, chocolate sale, and raffle to follow.



The importance of Fair Trade

Benefits of Fair Trade:

- * Fair prices
- * Fair and safe labor conditions
- * Direct trade
- * Democratic and transparent organizations
- * Community development
- * Environmental sustainability
- * Ensured rights of children
- * Cultivates environmental stewardship