

RESPONDING IMMEDIATELY AS CHRISTIANS
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (YEAR B) – 31 JANUARY 2021



'Jesus Heals A Possessed Man' | acknowledging www.lds.org

THE WHIRLWIND OF THE PANDEMIC

In 2020 we were caught in the whirlwind of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the whirlwind has strengthened in so many parts of the world this January.

At the same time, nations are at different points in the roll out of COVID-19 Vaccines, and research continues into vaccines and treatments.

The whirlwind of life can take many forms.

As we encounter the whirlwind in life,
may we, with the help of God,
support each other,
as a family.

This Sunday, we reflect on the Gospel passage,
And later we pray for those caught or struggling in a whirlwind.

GOSPEL OF MARK 1:21-28 – FREED FROM THE WHIRLWIND

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is in the synagogue in Capernaum, we are not told the details of what he taught. We are told that he taught them with authority. We are told of a person with an unclean spirit present. What a horrible whirlwind that person would be in, with so little control over his life.

Jesus lifts that person out of the whirlwind and restores him to serenity.

He amazes the people in the synagogue and they discuss it.

The Gospel passage begins,

“They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.”

The Gospel continues,

“They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’ ”

The word *“immediately” (euthus)* is translated above as *“just then”*

The word *“euthus”* has been used 1:12, 1:18, 1:20

since the public ministry of Jesus began after his baptism.

The man with an unclean spirit is present *“immediately”*.

His need is *“immediate”* – to be healed by Jesus, even though it is the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is not an excuse to delay healing.

We think of many people today who have immediate needs.

THE TERRIBLE WHIRLWIND THAT THE MAN HAS EXPERIENCED

We think of his life of isolation, confusion, frustration, doubt, arguments and fear.

We think of the responses of others to him and their fear of him.

The word *“immediately”* reminds us in Mark’s Gospel

of the urgency of Jesus’ ministry now,

of his love for us now, of his healing now,

and of our service of Jesus now.

“But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ‘Be silent, and come out of him!’ And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.”

SET FREE

And so, he is healed of the unclean spirit.

He is freed to be himself.

He is liberated. What an incredible moment.

The Gospel passage doesn’t even try to describe how he feels.

“They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another,

*'What is this? A new teaching—with authority!
He commands even the unclean spirits,
and they obey him.'
At once his fame began to spread
throughout the surrounding region of Galilee."*

He frees the man.
Jesus lifts him out of the whirlwind and restores him to life.

The whirlwind of life can take many forms.
Let us reflect on, and pray for, people within one.
Let us pray.

PRAYER FOR PEOPLE WITHIN A WHIRLWIND IN LIFE

We pray to you, O God,
for our sisters and brothers suffering
within the harsh whirlwinds of life.

We pray for people
who are traumatised, marginalised
and discriminated against,
because of their race, gender,
religious beliefs, culture or age.

We pray for people
who have been physically, sexually,
emotionally and spiritually abused
by people that they had trusted,
in family or church or society.

We pray for people
who have experienced the whirlwind
of war and conflict.

We pray for people
within the downward spiral of drug addiction.

We pray for people
who are traumatised
by a natural disaster.

We pray for people
internally displaced
who seek access to
shelter, food, health care,
employment and security.



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We pray for people
who are lost in life,
unable until now,
to find the meaning of life and their purpose.

We pray to you, O God,
that we work together with You,
to free those trapped or struggling
within the whirlwind.

We pray for your loving guidance, O God,
that we may,
as members of the human family,
keep each other safe,
advocate for the rights of others,
be just in our actions,
be loving and merciful,
seek your healing,
care for our common home,
discover the way of peace,
and bring hope
to our sisters and brothers.
Amen.

Fr Gerry

Readings <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/013121.cfm>