

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – January 27/28, 2018 – Reflection

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Think back to those days of yore when you were a grammar school scholar. When your teacher posed a question to the class, and you knew the answer, wouldn't you thrust your hand up into the air panting "Ooo ... Ooo ... Ooo" until she called on you? And when you gave the right answer, wouldn't you bask in the glory as the rest of the class envied your brilliance??! What student in their right mind would ever keep silent in class or leave a test question blank if they knew the correct answer?

When you have some good news: you get a promotion and a raise at work; your kid graduates with honors; there's a new baby in the family; Grandma's surgery went well; you two got engaged over the holidays; don't you wanna share it with people who matter in your life? Why would anyone wanna keep great news hushed up??!

In our faith, the last thing Jesus said to His disciples on the Mount of the Ascension was: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age." Jesus is Risen; we are redeemed; the long reign of sin is ended; the power of death is broken and God is with us till the end of the world!!! That's Good News ... heck, that's great news!!! No wonder Jesus wants us to share it with the world, with our kids, with our friends, with our enemies even. Jesus wants us to be His witnesses to a world so locked into bad news that

that we fall into war and anger and jealousy and despair; to tell this world, to shout it from the mountaintops that God loves us; God is with us; God forgives us when we mess up; God feeds us with Himself and calls us to the most intimate communion with Him; and when we die, God wants us to live forever with Him, happy beyond our most joyous moment ever on this earth!!

So, if we Christians, we believers have such good news to share, why is it that in St. Mark's Gospel which we read from this year, why is that Jesus seems to want to keep the joyous tidings such a big fat secret??

Why is it that when the Lord drives a demon outta somebody and the demon says I know who are, why is it that Jesus tells the devil to clam up and be gone?? Wouldn't ya think that a little impish PR might get the ball rollin' in having the world know who was walking among them?? And in the same gospel, whenever Jesus heals somebody be it the leper or the daughter of Jairus or the deaf-mute or the blind man why is it that the first thing the Lord tells the now healthy person to do is to NOT tell what happened to living soul? Why? It makes no sense! You you've witnessed the miracle of God's healing power, why wouldn't you tell anybody who'd listen. Wouldn't that be kinda convincing ... testimony from an eyewitness??!

And what about when the disciples Peter, James, and John went up the mountain on a hike with the Lord and at the top, they saw Him like they'd never seen Him before: dazzling brightness, otherworldly, with the great Jewish patriarchs Moses and Elijah? When the whole show was over, the first thing Jesus said to the guys was tell nobody about this!! Huh? Why ever not ... we've been tryin' to figure out who You are and now we know and You don't want us to let the others know??!!

If Jesus wants me to keep quiet about good news and faith and healing, why would I have my kids baptized? Why would I ever read the bible? Why would I preach a sermon or give a witness or forgive an enemy or give a gift or come to church, or receive Communion, or confess my sins? If all I'm supposed to do is shut up, I could do that quite well as a couch potato in front o' the boob tube, thank you very much.

Does Jesus really want you to be quiet? No! What He wants is for you to come to Him; for you to get to know Him; for you to see His hand in your life; for you to understand who He is; for you to fall in love with Him ... not because somebody had you baptized; not because somebody told you to believe; not because somebody guilted you into a church or a sacrament or a prayer ... but because you have found Him ... you have followed Him ... you have faith in Him ... not somebody else's finding; not somebody else's following; not somebody else's faith ... no ... YOURS!!!

And lemme tell you, if that ever happens in your life, if you ever go from the sidelines, to stand in the arena, and confess that Jesus is your Lord and your God, there's no power in the universe that could keep you from shouting that, shouting the truth, from the rooftops!!!