

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday – Ordinary Time – Year B

1. Next weekend is the Super Bowl – go Patriots
  - All games like football have rules – Super Bowl team with most penalties will probably lose
  - Life has rules too – if we are good – our community benefits and we profit  
If we are bad – you go to NSJ and our community suffers
  - Rules are made for games to make the game more enjoyable
  - Rules are made for life so that life can be more enjoyable
  - When God created life – He gave us a rule book – The Bible
2. In today's Gospel Jesus goes to the Synagogue and the people are amazed – not once, but TWICE
  - 1<sup>st</sup> time – it was what He said – He spoke with authority
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> time – it was what He did – He cast out demons
    - He didn't speak like a regular teacher
    - He didn't speak like someone who knew *about* the rules
    - He spoke like someone who *wrote* the rules – HE DID
3. Jesus spoke with Authority – not like Scribes and Pharisee
  - **He didn't just speak the truth, He was the truth**
  - *It wasn't His words* that kicked out the evil spirits – **it was who spoke the words**
  - How does this relate to us?
4. All of us would like what we say to have that kind of authority
  - WHAT WE SAY ONLY HAS AUTHORITY IF ITS BACKED UP BY WHO WE ARE
  - HOW WE LIVE MAKES A DIFFERENCE (and that's hard)
  - My son just visited Rome – tour guide – statue of a soul being weighed**
  - Angel on one side – satan on the other – looks like both arguing fairly**
  - but underneath a small demon is pulling on the scale**
  - This is how the devil works – we decide to live a good life, repent & devil seems to step aside
    - But he's only looking for another angle to attack – temptations happen at any time even after victory
    - We can't avoid this battle – devil wants to separate us from God
    - But Jesus was able to cast out the demon in this man & He can give us strength to beat temptations
    - IMAGINE HOW THIS POSSESSED MAN FELT AFTER THE DEMON WAS CAST OUT**
      - Tormented for years – maybe momentary lulls – torment always returns
      - Friends and family couldn't help
      - His only hope was divine intervention – a miracle
      - WE can relate – we're not possessed but we have sufferings and temptations
      - They seem to control us – to have power – just like this man – until JC comes
5. We are called to live by God's rule book and when we do – we battle evil in the world
  - To win that battle – we must live our faith, we must practice what we preach.
    1. Stay close to Jesus
    2. Stay close to the truth (read the rule book)
    3. Stay close to others fighting the fight
      - Every Christian is a Spiritual Warrior in the midst of the battle – let's have each other's back
      - As JC renews His commitment to us – let us renew our commitment to Him
  - For us to speak with AUTHORITY we need to know **authority brings responsibility**
  - We *can* claim authority – we really can
    - Because **its not just what we say – its who we are** CHRISTIANS