

22nd Tuesday in Ordinary Time

Homily of Bishop Barres

St. Agnes Cathedral

August 31, 2021

The fourth chapter of the Gospel of Luke emphasizes that in Capernaum the people were astonished at Our Lord's teaching because "he spoke with authority," an authority so beautiful and powerful that he commands, expels and decisively defeats unclean spirits.

We ourselves recognize Christ's authority and we ask him to lead us, guide us and protect us against every type of evil.

Last Sunday, the 7th Chapter of Mark described a long list of sins that emerge from the heart of men and women.

When we open ourselves to Christ's presence, power and authority, He defeats sin in us. He claims His victory of grace within us.

Christ's authority is expressed in He who is the Incarnate Word and through His authoritative presence in the inspired Word of God.

In the *Joy of the Gospel*, our Holy Father Pope Francis is eloquent about the power of the Word of God. He writes: "God's word is unpredictable in its power...The Church has to accept this unruly freedom of the word, which accomplishes what it wills in ways that surpass our calculations and ways of thinking." (22)

Through our baptismal call to holiness, we are called to welcome the Word of God into our hearts and souls and the power of the Word to defeat sin and temptation within us.

We are called to be the rich, dark soil that welcomes the Word with joy and determination, the rich dark soil that welcomes the grace that flows from the Word and rejects and expels every dimension of evil and presence of the Evil One.

Psalm 119 expresses so powerfully how the Word of God leads us to salvation and protects us from the paths of evil.

It reads: “Your word is a lamp for my steps and a light for my path.” The Word of God is a lamp for our steps on earth and a light for our path to Eternal Life.

The lamp of the Word of God keeps us in the light and steers us from the darkness.

I would recommend that we all commit to memory this short phrase from Psalm 119: “Your word is a lamp for my steps and light for my path... Your word is a lamp for my steps and light for my path... Your word is a lamp for my steps and light for my path.”

Commit it to memory but also use it as a daily aspiration prayer that we pray during the day or that we use to focus our time of silent mental prayer.

Allow this phrase to become part of your mind, heart and soul. Wire it permanently into the GPS of your life.