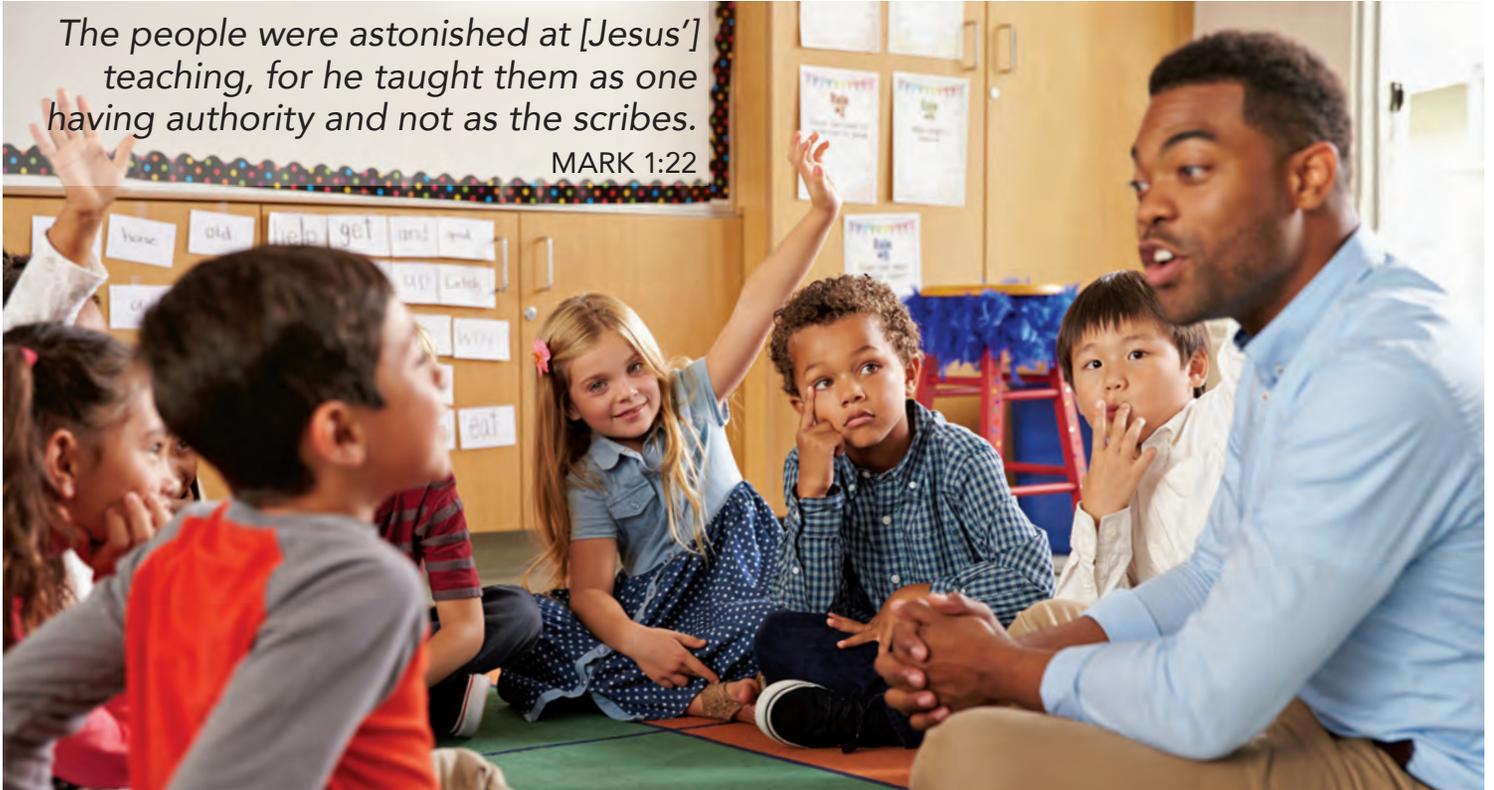


The people were astonished at [Jesus'] teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

MARK 1:22



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Teaching with Authority

Who teaches with authority? To whose voice should we listen? The first reading provides an answer. Moses had been appointed by God to be God’s voice for the Israelites—for that is what a prophet is. Moses assures the people that God will raise up a leader like himself. They are to listen to that voice just as they listened to his voice. The Gospel presents Jesus as the fulfillment of that promise.

The issues of contemporary life are extraordinarily complex. Actually, when one is in the midst of living, it is always complex. It was complex at the time of Moses and at the time of Jesus as well. So, to whose voice should disciples listen? It is easy to answer: “The one with authority.” But who has authority? Recognizing genuine authority is not as easy as it sounds. Moses’ position of authority was eventually recognized, but that was not the case in the beginning. The expression, “Who died and left you boss?” comes right

out of an earlier story of Moses (Exodus 2:14). As for Jesus, he never held a recognized position of authority in his society, and we know his authority seems eventually to have been rejected by most.

A sign of genuine authority is seen in the integrity of one’s life. Moses led the people through the struggles of the wilderness. In this Gospel, Jesus confirms the message of his teaching with his works of healing. Who has authority? “By their fruits you will know them” (Matthew 7:16).

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- ★ *As a disciple of Jesus, whose voice are you inclined to follow? Why?*
- ★ *What is your attitude toward official authority? Is this a good attitude to hold?*

Dear Padre,

Recently my son made his first reconciliation and was told to say some prayers as his penance. Doesn't this make prayer seem like a punishment for being bad?

You raise a valid concern. In fact the latest rite of reconciliation suggests that, if at all possible, penance must right the wrong and be clear enough that the penitent knows he has fulfilled it. Penance should not just show God we're sorry; it should also put us on the path to a Christian life and correct the harm our sins caused.

For instance, if someone has stolen something and returning it would reveal his sin (this cannot be part of the penance), making a comparable donation might be a fitting penance. When someone confesses gossiping, I challenge him or her to tell someone else something good about the person who was gossiped about. In other words, instead of spreading pain, learn to spread joy. The penance for disobeying parents might be to do something nice for them or do chores without being asked. This type of penance is far more beneficial to the penitent and the community at large.

Using prayer as a penance can send the signal that we pray only when

we've been bad or need something from God, like forgiveness. On the contrary, prayer should be constant. We should pray always and in all ways, if for no other reason than to give glory to God.

Fr. Rick Potts, CSSR
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A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

We must never forget that true power, at any level, is service, whose bright summit is upon the cross.... Although man frequently equates authority with control, dominion, success, for God authority is always synonymous with service, humility, love. It means entering the logic of Jesus who kneels to wash the Apostles' feet.

ADDRESS TO INTERNATIONAL UNION
OF SUPERIORS GENERAL, MAY 8, 2013



Calendar

Monday

FEBRUARY 1
Weekday
Heb 11:32–40
Mk 5:1–20

Tuesday

FEBRUARY 2
Presentation
of the Lord
Mal 3:1–4
Heb 2:14–18
Lk 2:22–40
or 2:22–32

Wednesday

FEBRUARY 3
Weekday
Heb 12:4–7, 11–15
Mk 6:1–6

Thursday

FEBRUARY 4
Weekday
Heb 12:18–19, 21–24
Mk 6:7–13

Friday

FEBRUARY 5
St. Agatha,
Virgin and Martyr
Heb 13:1–8
Mk 6:14–29

Saturday

FEBRUARY 6
St. Paul Miki and
Companions, Martyrs
Heb 13:15–17, 20–21
Mk 6:30–34

Sunday

FEBRUARY 7
Fifth Sunday
in Ordinary Time
Jb 7:1–4, 6–7
1 Cor 9:16–19, 22–23
Mk 1:29–39