

## **Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time: February 7, 2021**

St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore

A Reflection on a Day in the Life of Jesus (*Mark 1: 29-39*)

I envy Jesus' ability to get moving and get things done. Once he is baptized and has solidified his obedience to the Father in the desert, he wastes no time getting to it. The bulk of his ministry has two settings--synagogue for prayer and teaching, and among the people, connecting and working. He is filled with purpose. Perhaps not completely tireless, but resolute nonetheless.

In this Capernaum of modern-day, I am desperate to get out and do as Jesus does. And wouldn't it be wonderful to have both his stamina *and* power! What if, for just one day, we could inspire that kind of true change or affect such immediate healing? Even Simon's mother-in-law, after being ill with fever, was able to get up and get to it! In today's trio of stories, I find I relate most to the townspeople "gathered at the door". Sometimes quite literally I am looking out of my front door, waiting...waiting. And with the awful backdrop of 2020 and the conditions of this continuing pandemic, I relate even more to one of those with an unclean spirit!

This is, however, one of the treasures of this gospel. There are many roles in this story, and one role can't be seen without the other. How can Jesus reveal the Kingdom if no one who is sick accepts his compassion? How does he show the depth of God's love if he has no students wanting to know more?

Perhaps in these days, we are the teachers or the healers or the busy mothers-in-law (Thank you if you are!). Perhaps we are retreatants, taking this forced time of separation and making something prayerful of it. Perhaps we are like the disciples, keeping tabs on people and checking in with folks. Perhaps we are the sick, or those who accompany them. Perhaps we are simply witnesses.

The role we hold has purpose, even if it isn't the role we might want.

Maybe what's more comforting is that these roles are shifting and interdependent. We are connected to each other even when we feel most distanced, and as God's time shifts, so do our responsibilities.

Most importantly, each role allows for an encounter with Christ, the Healer and the Teacher. Do we have the fortitude to remain open to him?

*Kate Volpe*