



## ***4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR B – January 28, 2018***

The Russian philosopher Karl Marx once said that the aim of education and philosophy should be - not just to explain the world but to change it. The question must be asked, change it in accord with whose vision of reality? The vision of Karl Marx was not the vision of God. The vision of the Scribes and Pharisees in today's gospel is not the vision of God.

In the first reading (Deuteronomy 18:15-20) we hear that the role of a prophet is to speak on behalf of God to explain God's vision of reality. And if he speaks on behalf of someone else, he will die. If the people will not listen to him when he speaks on behalf of God, God says, "I myself will make them answer for it."

In the second reading (I Corinthians 7:32-35) Saint Paul reminds us in his own inimitable way to get our priorities straight. He says, "Don't let distractions keep you from the way of our Lord". Are there any distractions in your life that keep you from "Our Lord's Way"?

In the Gospel (Mark 1:21-28) we hear how the People of Capernaum received sacred instruction in their synagogue every Sabbath. One Sabbath day, they had a different kind of teacher, His name was Jesus. What Jesus taught that day, as well as the way he presented and demonstrated his message, simply amazed them. St. Mark tells us why. He says, "They were astounded at his teaching, because he taught them as one having authority and not as the Scribes and the Pharisees". The Scribes and Pharisees placed heavy burdens on people's backs and did nothing to lift them. (Matthew 23:4). Jesus did not do that. He taught with divine authority and lifted those burdens.

What does it mean to teach with that kind of authority? When we compare the teaching of Jesus with that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we notice three distinguishing qualities.

First, the teaching of Jesus is from the heart and not just from the head, He spoke about love in a way that went far beyond the laws of the Scribes and Pharisees. In fact, with his kind of love, their manmade laws weren't even necessary.

Second, Jesus focused on the spirit not the letter of the law. Keeping a whole bunch of manmade rituals does not make us good Catholics. Man was not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27).

And third, Jesus inspired a positive change of heart in his listeners - a metanoia experience. Jesus tells us once again that we have the capacity to reform, reshape, refashion our lives. And he is willing to help us.

For a few moments in silence, listen for the voice of Jesus, Recall the words from psalm 95. "If today you hear his voice, harden not your heart".

**Today,**  
if you hear His voice, do  
not harden your  
**HEARTS...**  
**Hebrews 3:15**