

**The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John
Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ,
January 31, 2021**

UNCLEAN SPIRITS



In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus comes into the synagogue in Capernaum. While there, a man possessed by an unclean spirit suddenly cries out, "Have you come to destroy us?"

If Jesus had not entered the synagogue that day, would the congregation have known the man was possessed? And perhaps even more importantly, would the man himself have recognized the evil that had taken over his life?

The teacher who came into the synagogue, the teacher the possessed man recognized on a human level as "Jesus of Nazareth," and on a spiritual level as "the Holy One of God," diagnosed the man's condition and rebuked the demon. Evil could not hide in the presence of Jesus, the light of goodness.

Today, our world is filled with darkness, filled with "unclean spirits" that can corrupt and possess people. There are the unclean spirits of materialism, selfishness, greed, racism, hypocrisy, pornography, crime, sexual abuse, domestic violence, lust, addiction, pride, laziness, moral indifference, digital idolatry, etc.

In the presence of Jesus, the Holy One of God, those evils become evident. His word proclaims the truth, and his example reveals the way to a life of meaning, purpose, and happiness.

In our day, many people seem to be walking away from Christ and from his Church. That may be happening because, like the man in Sunday's Gospel, they find the presence of Christ makes them uncomfortable. He is too unsettling to the unclean spirits that may have found a place in their lives.

On the journey at your service in our Lord,

Father John Carlos