

Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Cycle B: Sunday, January 28, 2018
Church of St. Joan of Arc, Marlton NJ
[Mark 1:21-28]

Who's Amazing?

How many people have you met that you would call "amazing"?

He is amazing! She is amazing!

Urban Dictionary defines "amazing" this way: "A *person that makes you feel like no one else possibly could, makes you want to fight for them, to keep them. Someone that no matter what they say, even if nothing at all, makes your day 10x better than the last.*"

When the people in Mark's Gospel first see Jesus and hear him speak, we are told they were *amazed!*

Why is that?

Here's the first thing they notice: Jesus is not like the scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day. He speaks as one with authority, but not like the scribes. He has authority, but

he doesn't abuse his power. He doesn't heap heavy burdens on them. He doesn't ask them to do things he himself wouldn't do. (This was unlike the kind of authority the people were used to from the Romans and even from their own leaders. Abuse of authority. Hmm. Sounds familiar even today, right?)

What else do they notice?

Jesus is compassionate. He cares for others. He pays attention to others. He never belittles or hurts another. He is merciful. Forgiving. He not only speaks the truth, he lives it. He gives himself completely to you. He gives his heart.

He is *amazing!*

Here's another way Urban Dictionary describes "amazing": "*Amazing is the definition of what your heart longs for and what your mind needs.*"

We were made for amazing!

You see: your head and your heart were made for amazing. It's only going to be

“amazing” that completely satisfies and brings peace and joy to your heart.

And you only get “amazing” from Jesus!

You might think you get “amazing” from your smartphone. Oh, yes, how we love our smartphones and smart-TVs. They are amazing until the newest version of them shows up and then what was amazing yesterday is now “too slow.”

The iPhone, I will admit, can do a lot of incredible things. But here is something it cannot do: it cannot connect me to God!

Only Jesus can do that! And that is why our heads and hearts need Jesus!

We need Jesus!

When we let Jesus be the authority of our lives, we find a new way to live, a new way to love, a new way to see, a new way handle difficulties and stress in our life. When we let Jesus be our authority, we find a peace and

a joy that doesn’t come and go.

Here is something else amazing: Jesus is here ... right now.

Jesus just spoke to you in the Word we heard from the Bible. That was Jesus speaking. What’s more: bread and wine will become His body and blood. He will feed you with his love and mercy. That’s amazing.

Here’s something else: Jesus cares about you and the world we live in. Jesus wants to make us the best version of ourselves! He wants us to be amazing – in love, in mercy, in kindness.

Here’s something else amazing: there is a school that puts Jesus at the center of everything it does and teaches. That school is St. Joan of Arc, right here. Jesus is the reason for this school.

We want our kids to know and love the Amazing Jesus. That’s why they pray here every day, go to Mass, learn about an amazing God who

created an amazing world
with amazing people.

They are taught every day to
live like Jesus, to think and
act like Jesus.

Amazing.

Every time I celebrate Mass
with our students, I am
amazed. They lift up my
spirit. They help me fall in
love with Jesus again!

Let's all be amazed by Jesus.
And if we are not amazed,
let's ask "why not?"

Some of us here may be
turned off by faith, by
religion, by Church. It may
even have been Church
authorities who have helped
put us in this state. Or maybe
this whole church thing, Mass,
has gotten too routine, even
boring. To all of you, and to
everyone here, I invite you:
meet Jesus again! Listen to
His words again for the first
time. You can be amazed.
As you receive Holy
Communion, ask Him to touch
your heart, to open your eyes,
in a new way. It can happen.
Right here. Right now.