



BISHOP RICHARD'S

Weekly Reflection

Dear brothers and sisters,

Capernaum, the town where so much of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee was centred, had a very significant synagogue. Visiting the remains of the town today, one can see the black basalt stone foundations of the synagogue of Jesus' time, with the remnants of a later building constructed on those same foundations. It was a real centre for the town, a place of prayer, a place of peace, of preaching and of mission for the Jewish community.

Mark, in today's Gospel, relates two experiences of Jesus' authority – the authority of His teaching and the outpouring of His authority over the unclean spirit that possessed the man whom Jesus healed. Jesus' teaching has the authority that is His as the Word made Flesh and the power of the authority of His teaching is recognised by those who listen to Him. The Word of God – made flesh in the person of Jesus – is always active. This outpouring of action is seen in the healing of the man who is possessed. Jesus' authority in action overcomes all things.

In the person of Jesus, the prophecies of former times – going right back to Moses' prophecy in the first reading this Sunday – are fulfilled. All of human history looks to the moment of Jesus, “The Word who is Life.” In the Synagogue in Capernaum, His teaching called people to truth; His healing brought the possessed man to healing, to a place of dignity, of life and of peace.

Each of us is called in the same way: to listen to the truth of the Gospel and to find in it the dignity and healing that is the universal call to holiness. Just as the man healed in the Gospel found peace, so we are called to “a peace that the

world cannot give", that is Jesus' gift to us. We must, therefore, be peacemakers and in a world so torn apart by conflict, that call is ever more insistent. Let us pray that we may answer, with renewed hope and vigour, that call to be bearers of peace.

With every blessing,

+ Richard