"To Lead an Apostolic Community, Under Authority, That Brings People to Jesus Christ."

Bishop's Note: January 29, 2015 – A New Teaching With Authority!

During this season of Epiphany, my Bishop's Notes are focusing on how the Holy Scriptures make the person and character of Jesus manifest as the Son of God. We've seen how God spoke to Jesus: ***"You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased."*** (Mk. 1:11) And Nathanael, having encountered Jesus proclaimed: ***"Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel."*** (John 1:49) In last week's gospel, Jesus himself proclaims: ***"The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the gospel."*** (Mark 1:15)

This week's gospel is a continuation of the passage from the Gospel of Mark. Jesus has called the first disciples and immediately sets about doing his primary ministry – teaching about the Kingdom of God. St. Mark tells us that the people present were amazed because Jesus taught ***"...as one who had authority, and not as the Scribes."*** (Mark 1:22) We don't know exactly who these people were, however, they were able to understand that Jesus wasn't simply restating the scriptures, but rather explaining the realities of the Kingdom of God and how the scriptures pointed to that reality.

However, the worshipers in the synagogue were not the only ones who recognized Jesus' authority. St. Mark tells us that a man with an unclean spirit was also present. The unclean spirit sees Jesus and immediately knows who Jesus is, and it announces for all to hear: ***"What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God."*** (Mark 1:24 ESV) It correctly recognizes Jesus and his power to destroy unclean spirits. But more importantly, the unclean spirit proclaims: ***"I know who you are – the Holy One of God!"***

The men in the synagogue recognize one who teaches with authority, but the demon recognizes the person and character of Jesus! Too many people in this present age recognize Jesus as one having authority – the moral teacher; the religious leader – but they fail to recognize Jesus as the Holy One of God!

My prayer for you and me is that we will assist those people who see something in

Jesus, but don't realize who he really is – the Holy One of God!

I pray you all a truly blessed Lord's Day!

Bishop Menees

Catechism Questions 67 - 69

67. What is the result of the Ascension?

Jesus ascended into heaven so that, through him, his Father might send us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, Christians are united as Christ's Body on earth to Jesus, our ascended and living Head, and in him to one another. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27; Ephesians 4:15-16; John 14:15-29, 15:5-9)

68. What does it mean for Jesus to sit at God the Father's right hand?

The throne on the monarch's right was traditionally the seat for the chief executive in the kingdom. Ruling with his Father in heaven, Jesus is Lord over the Church and all creation, with authority to equip his Church, advance his Kingdom, bring sinners into saving fellowship with God the Father, and finally to establish justice and peace upon the earth. (Isaiah 9:6-7; 32:16-18; Ephesians 1:22; 4:11-12; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 5:9-10)

69. What does Jesus do for you as he sits at the Father's right hand?

Noting my needs and receiving my prayers, Jesus intercedes for me as our great high priest. Through Jesus and in his name, I am now granted access to the Father when I make my confessions, praises, thanksgivings and requests to him. (Hebrews 7:23-25)