

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

February 4, 2024 • 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Mark 1:29–39

Taming Our Demons

After leaving the synagogue, Jesus enters Peter's house and cures his mother-in-law. The town begins to gather at the door bringing their sick and possessed. Jesus cured many of them. He leaves with his disciples and travels to the nearby villages to preach and cast out demons.

I believe that most of us have some sort of demon inside us. Something we would really like to change about ourselves, but just can't. I'm not talking about superficial things like the size of our nose or hips. It's an inside thing—some bad habit or personal sin that usually ends up hurting the people closest to us or even ourselves.

It could be something like losing your temper, not thinking before you speak or not speaking when you should. It might even be some sort of addiction. With me it was letting my anger loose in unhealthy ways, usually by yelling at the people I loved most.

When my children were little, my husband traveled. I was lucky enough to be a stay-at-home mom, but I got to stay home with five kids under ten. I loved my children; there is no question that I would have died for them. But whenever I thought of Paul's message in 1 Corinthians 13, "love is patient; love is kind... it is slow to anger..." I cringed. That was not me. I woke every morning and said to myself, "I will get through this day without yelling. I will try harder, work harder; I can change."

The truth was I couldn't change, not by myself that is. It wasn't until I could say, "I cannot do this God, please help me," that I could begin to tame my demon. My morning prayer became, "Lord, fill me with your love and strength so that I can get

through breakfast without yelling." And then, "Get me to lunchtime, Lord."

I finally discovered that the love Paul was talking about in 1 Corinthians was something stronger than even a mother's love; it was God's love. The great thing is that with God's help (and sometimes some professional help) we can all conquer our own worst demons. We just have to ask.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Discuss what we mean when we talk about good and bad habits. Ask each person to name a bad habit they have, and then have each person tell the others what good habits they see in them.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

What is your own personal demon? Are you ready to ask God to give you his love and strength to overcome it? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?