

WHAT'S HAPPENING? – Sunday, January 28, 2024 – Fourth Sunday in Epiphany

Hello Westminster people:

Well, I 'gotta' tell you! This coming Sunday's assigned gospel reading from Mark 1:21-28 is bound to seem really weird to our 21st century ears. Why? Because it's about Jesus beginning his public ministry by attending sabbath worship in the synagogue at Capernaum where he is suddenly challenged by a man with an 'unclean spirit'. This story ends with Jesus responding by telling the demon to "Shut up!" and then performing an exorcism.

Now, these days, not many of us interpret the world in terms of demons and exorcisms so we might decide to sit uncomfortably but politely in the pew while, at the same time, ignoring both this New Testament reading and the sermon based on it. Tempting as that might be, I implore you to keep an open mind for two reasons.

First, the scene portrayed in the first chapter of Mark's gospel has little or nothing in common with the 1973 horror movie *The Exorcist* in which the demon-possessed twelve-year old Regan, played by Linda Blair, rotates her head 360 degrees, makes guttural sounds and barks like a dog.

Second, there's a lot of stuff going on 'between the lines' in Mark's story and it's my task as your minister to bring to light this very important 'between-the-lines stuff' so that this story makes sense. Mind you, it took a lot of behind-the-scenes research and plain old-fashioned grunt work but, if I do say so myself, I've managed to achieve this. My achievement should be readily apparent in this coming Sunday's sermon, which I've titled *The Exorcist*.

ONE IMPORTANT REMINDER

Next Sunday we at Westminster will be celebrating the Sacrament of Holy Communion. If you're attending this service via Zoom-church, please have appropriate communion elements at hand.

Whether you're joining us in-person, or via Zoom-church, or YouTube, I look forward to being with you once more this coming Sunday.

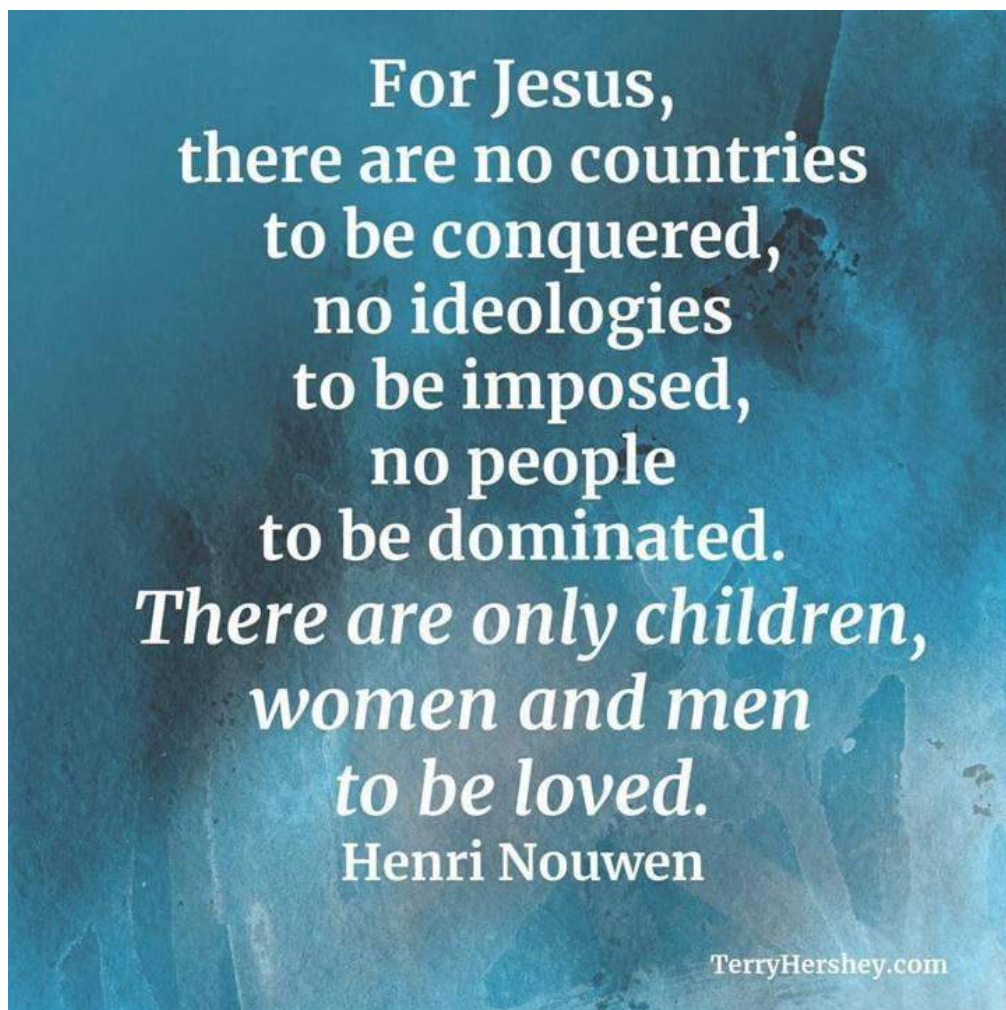
Shalom,

Rev. Del

P.S. This coming Sunday's 'Announcements' are attached.

INSIGHTS

Below and attached is a comment by Henri Nouwen. How do you feel about what he has said?



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