

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (B) 02/01/2015

Aristotle, regarded as one of the greatest thinkers of his time, establishes the belief that the heavier an object, the faster it falls to the ground. It is a belief that goes unchallenged until Galileo summons learned professors to the base of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. He proceeds to drop a ten-pound and a one-pound weight. Both land at the same instant. The professors don't believe their eyesight. The power of an established belief is so strong that they continue to promote that Aristotle's theory is correct even when it is proven incorrect.

Once something is **established** it is most difficult to accept **change**, because we simply don't see the **established reality** any longer. We **witness** this **phenomenon** in most families. As we grow and develop in our families we receive a **label** and a **role**. This isn't anything **evil**. Rather, it is an **unconscious natural process** by which family members remain **compatible**... until they don't. Then **anger** and **strife** replaces **cooperation** and **compatibility**.

Religion operates like a big family. The **established practice**, for example, (that was **accepted** for hundreds of years) is for all (except those at the very top of the pyramid) is to **pray**, **pay**, and **obey**. When **Jesus** breaks out of this **established** way of acting and believing - by **healing** on the **Sabbath** - the church leaders are **incensed**. They are too **blinded** by the **established beliefs** to see that **healing** is acceptable anytime it is needed!

The tendency to simply accept what is **established** can also prevent **us** from knowing and accepting **healing** too. We - **unconsciously** -

accept without question, for instance, that we have no alternative to our being entrenched in guilt and feelings of unworthiness. We, also, like the unclean spirit in our gospel story, cry out, '*What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?*'

It is a cry that comes from our established belief that God in Christ is separate from us. It is a cry that says that we must first achieve - by discipline and achieved sanctity - worthiness so that sometime in the future we might - after some kind of punishment and purification - attain enough merit to live with God.

The only response that has any effect on us is the one that Jesus offers, '*Quiet! Come out of him!*' We need to practice quiet. We need to practice silence. We need to hear God in Christ say to us, '*Quiet!*' We, in no other way, can know the authority of Christ to remove guilt and feelings of unworthiness. We, in no other way, can know the freedom to practice a willingness to release that which is long established as reality (like Aristotle's belief) that isn't real. We, in no other way, can know that God in Christ is in union with us NOW.