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“People immediately recognized him” (Mark 6:55).

Gen 1:1-19; Mark 6:53-56

By pairing today’s Gospel with the creation story in Genesis, the Lectionary highlights the connection between Jesus and God the Creator. By healing the sick and dismissing unclean spirits, Jesus turns the formless wasteland of deformity and demons back into the garden of life God intended in the beginning. Gennesaret, a place on the lake near Capernaum, was famous for its fertile soil, amplifying this glimpse of Eden in its pristine state. Jesus is the Lord of Creation. Everyone who touches even the edge of his cloak is restored, for Jesus is the very image and likeness of God

What the Gospel of John makes explicit with its Prologue and signs, the synoptics show with healing miracles in which Jesus makes mud paste from his saliva to restore sight, hearing and speech. The first Adam, formed from the earth and given life by the breath of God, now reappears in Jesus, the new Adam, who removes the damage inflicted on humanity by its estrangement from the source of Life.

Mark captures the excitement of this scene. Jesus and the disciples have come ashore after having experienced the miracle of the loaves and Jesus’ mastery of the storm at sea. The people immediately recognize Jesus, and they “scurry” about the

countryside and farmsteads to bring all the sick and dispirited people they know, lining them up in the marketplaces and along the roads. Jesus is filled with the original blessing that flows from him to reclaim a broken world.

Cinematically, as the music swells and the sun sets against the horizon over the lake, this might have been the glorious end of the story, but we are only in Chapter 6 of Mark's Gospel. These miracles are but the overture to a greater drama. Jesus has not come to simply restore the first Creation but to announce a New Creation.

By his teaching and example, Jesus will invite humanity to repent and freely choose a different path forward from its seduction and embrace of sin and death. He will bear the full cost of human alienation from God by his death on the cross, and by his resurrection Jesus will open the way to new life. But we must turn our hearts to God to receive this gift of mercy and our authentic identity as children of God. Salvation will not be imposed but offered, and those who accept it will be transformed by the fire of divine friendship that guides and prepares us to enter the Beloved Community, which is the goal of Creation, eternal life with God.

The thematic majesty of God's plan of redemption is the essence of the Good News. More than any hero story, the Gospel gathers all human longing and hope into a single, absolute drama that determines the fate of the world. It is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our human brother and divine savior. Do we recognize him?

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