

Oct. 25, 2020: The 23rd Sunday after Pentecost (The healing of the demoniac of Gadarenes)

Epistle: Ephesians 2:4-10:

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Gospel: Luke 8:26-39:



Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!” For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains

and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

The gospel reading of this Sunday describes the sad situation of man when Christ came into the world. Not only spiritually but physically, man was in dire need of divine intervention. The demoniac from Gadara is representative of this terrible situation: he *"had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs."* He was no longer a sociable human being, interacting with his fellow human beings; he was living among the dead: *"he lived not in a house but in the tombs."* This man's identity had been stolen by the evil spirits, who now had total control over him: *"What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him."* It is not the man who responds to Christ's question, but the evil spirits. His daily life was a continuous torture, a living hell: *"he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness."*

By granting the evil spirits their wish, to enter the herd of swine, Christ our Savior liberates the demoniac from the captivity of the "legion," and restores his dignity and his sanity both spiritual and physical. Instead of finding a fierce and evil tormented person, the people from the city found him *"sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind."*

This is the place for a normal person: at the feet of Jesus, clothed in the garment of forgiveness, physically and mentally healed and restored.

Fr. George Bazgan

Sunday Service Attendance

Due to the continuing State of Emergency, which limits the number of people attending Church services, we are asking our members to make sure that, for time being, only 1 (one) person from each family attend our Sunday Divine Liturgy.

We apologize for this inconvenience and hope that the restrictions will continue to be relaxed in the near future.

Those who attend, are kindly asked to observe the recommendations of the experts, such as: washing their hands, social distancing, etc.

Thank you all and may God keep us safe!

Live-Streaming the Liturgy

Due to some technical problems, last Sunday live-streaming the Liturgy was not possible.

We apologize and ask you to tune in again.

Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP / PLEDGE

The Board of Directors extends a warm appeal to all supporters of our parish, asking them **to pay their membership as soon as possible.**

This way we can ensure that we have the necessary funds to fulfill our financial obligations for the rest of the year.

We also encourage you to **renew your financial pledge** and be as generous as you can.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Prayer at the time of pandemic

O Lord, our God, who are rich in mercy and, with Your wise care, guard our lives, listen to our prayer, receive our repentance for our sins, stop this pandemic, as You have ceased the punishment of the people in the days of King David. You who are the Physician of our souls and our bodies, give healing to those contaminated with this disease, hastily raising them from their bed of suffering, to glorify You, the Most Merciful Savior, and protect those who are healthy from any disease.

Bless, strengthen and shield, O Lord, with Your grace, all those who, with love of people and sacrifice, care for the sick at their homes or in hospitals. Remove all disease and suffering from the people and teach us to value life and health as gifts coming from You.

Grant us, O God, Your peace, and fill our hearts with unwavering faith in Your protection, with hope in Your help, and with love towards You and our neighbor.

For Yours is to show mercy and to save us, O our God, and to You we give glorify: Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!