

## *5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*

Today, the Gospel tells of the exorcism of demons from two demonic people who came out of the tombs of the Gergesin region. They were so fierce that no one dared to go where they were.

We hear about the exorcism of demons, about their incarnation, with the permission of Jesus Christ, into a herd of pigs and the death of a herd at sea. When the people of Gadara heard what had happened, they asked the Lord to leave them and He crossed to the other shore and came to Capernaum.

Demons harm people. They try to turn people away from God and draw them into their kingdom by subjecting them to their evil will. The only begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, came into the world to destroy the works of the devil and defeat him with all his host. The Apostle John, the Theologian says, "...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

By casting out the two demons of Gadara, He thus testified that He had power over them. The demons themselves acknowledged that He had such power over them, because they asked His permission to enter the herd of swine.

There has been demon-possessed in all ages, and they are in our time. But it is necessary to distinguish mentally ill people from the insane. A mentally ill person has a damaged psyche, and a demon-possessed person has another being, that is, evil.

One day, after the Transfiguration, on Mount Favor, Jesus Christ healed a demon who had been brought to Him by an unhappy father. "Lord," he pleaded, "have mercy on my son; for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him" (Matthew 17: 15-16). Jesus Christ cast out the devil and healed the young man. Then the apostles asked why could they not cast out the evil spirit? The Lord said, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you." "But this kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17: 20-21).

Evil spirits seldom inhabit anyone, but seduce everyone without exception. The devil tempted even Our Lord, Jesus Christ, Himself. Temptations are varied, but they are all aimed at leading a person to sin. Therefore, the Apostle Paul counsels us all to take up the full armor of God to resist the wiles of the devil. He says that, first of all, take the shield of faith with which you can quench all the hot arrows of the wicked, gird yourself with the truth, put on the armor of righteousness, and take the spiritual sword, which is the word of God (Eph. 6: 13-17).

The event in the vicinity of Gerasin, the healing of two demons and the dissatisfaction of its inhabitants with the behavior of Jesus, once again, convinces us of the importance of faith in human life, including its practice, application through prayer and the Holy Mysteries. He who truly lives by faith, by God's commandments, receives its concrete fruits. He feels God's presence and God's help in life, and God's protection from various influences of evil forces.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, let us try to eradicate, from our hearts, all passions, all sin, and all evil, so as not to allow the devil to deceive us. "...and give no opportunity to the devil," says the Apostle Paul (Eph. 4:27). The Apostle James adds, "...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4: 7).

Fr. Serhii Deiak

