



60<sup>th</sup> Year October 21, 2012 Pamphlet # 43 (3099)

## THE HEALING OF THE POSSESSED MAN IN GADARA

### **The Holy Scripture and the Fathers**

The miracle of today's Gospel passage is also narrated by Mark and Matthew. Just that Matthew speaks about two possessed men. Commenting on this difference the sacred Chrysostom, notes that there does not exist a disagreement among the Gospels. If Luke and Mark were saying that there is one possessed fellow and not two, they would give the impression that they are coming into contradiction with the narration of Matthew. Now however, narrating the event with their own personal manner, Luke and Mark focus on the possessed man who was in a much worse condition than the other fellow. The same interpretation is encountered also in the rest of the Fathers of the Church who interpret the passage.

In general, when someone diligently studies Chrysostom and the rest of the Fathers of the Church, who interpret the Holy Scripture, he ascertains that when they find a difference between the Evangelists in the narration of a specific event, they never say that one of the Evangelists is making some mistake. Always in their interpretation, they teach that the Evangelists complete one another and all that they write is true. In the Scripture lying does not fit, because essentially the author is the infallible God. Furthermore, the holy Fathers because they have the same deep experiences with the holy persons of the Scripture, they understand in depth and interpret their words and actions correctly. And here where one superficial reader is scandalized reading something from the Scripture, the Saint finds a deep meaning and many truths and is moved and is taught and teaches.

### **The possessed man to the Gadarenes and the sinners**

The description of the possessed man in the Gospels is very fearful. He was overcome for many years by a whole legion of demons, in other words, by very many demons. He was not wearing clothes, did not stay in a home, but in the tombs. When with difficulty they would tie him with chains, he would break them and was led by the demons to wilderness places. Constantly day and

night he would make shouts and severely wound himself with stones. No one would dare pass by the place where he was, because he was very wild.

Saint Theophylactos observes that whoever is far from God and are slaves of sin, resemble this possessed fellow. Because they dwell outside of the home of the Father and are naked of the garment of baptism and of the divine virtues. With their unjust actions they become fearful and wild to their fellow men and severely cut themselves up, because they are possessed by a legion of demonic passions. They frequent the tombs, that is, the places of sin, as are the night centers and the places of easy and unlawful gain. Only Christ is able to heal them, granting them repentance, so that dressed now with the garment of the virtues and frequenting the churches, they proclaim with their example, the majesties of our great God and Savior Jesus.

### **God governs the world**

Quite a few people, either because they see evil triumphing in the world, or because they misunderstand some phrases of the Scripture, think that the demons govern the world. In order to spurn this false viewpoint the sacred Chrysostom gives a wonderful speech, in which he used as a basic answer the narration of the healing of the possessed man of the Gadarenes. He stresses that if the demonic beings truly governed the world, we would not differ in anything from the possessed men of the Gadarenes. If the demons had full control over us, then in "the flash" of an eye they would wipe out the whole world, just as they wiped out and drowned the whole flock of pigs, when they received permission from the Lord. And if God did not show much mercy on possessed people, the demons would have caused the same end as the pigs. However, God is the only king and governor of the whole world. So for this reason also He cedes to the demons so much authority over sinful people, enough for people to repent and for the existence and wickedness of the demons to show very clearly. Few are the times, like that of Job, when God allows the demons to bother holy people. This occurs then, in order for their holiness and selfless love for God to show very clearly.

Here it must be stressed that evil does not comprise any being or some rational or irrational being. It is an event, a behavior and a manner of behavior. Even the demons, as regards their nature, are angels created by God. Because, however they are free, due to their free choice they departed from God and became firm in evil behavior, in other words in always acting without God.

So for this reason the Saints of the Church established infant baptism. It is necessary from an infant age for man to put on the grace of the Holy Spirit and for that conduct to be given to him, which will make him firm in keeping the divine will. Thus virtue and sanctification will become a permanent mark of his being, and will end up his eternal garment, which he will wear eternally, in the home of God the Father.

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