

Why? The spiritual advantage imposed that they try to take advantage of Christ's presence in their area, to the utmost. In any case, Christ came to the world for this reason, to offer Himself to people. And nevertheless, their selfishness, like a cancerous pathogenesis of the soul, does not allow them to perceive their advantage, and leads them to a self destructive behavior. They chase Christ away, considering Him a cause of harm. Why? Because the destruction of the herd, from which they would reap monetary gains, burdened their darkened conscience more than the spiritual benefit that they would have reaped from their company with Christ.

We easily condemn the Gadarenes, without considering, that in many cases, we copy them. Every time we prefer sin to virtue, we are imitating them, chasing Christ away and His delivering grace, in order for us to be attached to our barren egotism. Every time we reject the voice of our conscience, in order to follow our passionate desire, we're justifying them in their behavior, raising obstacles to our relationship with God. Every time that we disdain the gospel exhortation in our life, valuing the refuse of this world, we are validating them, as an example for imitation, whereas they are to be avoided. Brethren, let us learn to not allow our passionate selfishness to wipe away our essential advantage, our acquaintance and company with Christ.

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY OCTOBER 23, 2016 6TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, *James (Iakovos) the Apostle, brother of Our Lord, Our Righteous Father Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople*

TONE OF THE WEEK *Tone One*

EOTHINON : *Seventh Eothinon*

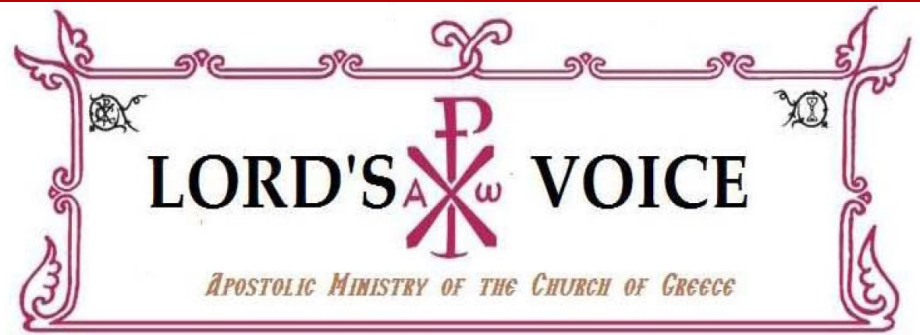
EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to Galatians 1:11-19*

GOSPEL: *Luke 8: 26-39*

NEXT SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2016 5TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, *Cleopas and Artemas of the 70 Apostles, The Holy Martyrs Zenobius and His Sister Zenobia, Joseph, Patriarch of Constantinople.*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 11:31-33; 12:1-9*

GOSPEL: *Luke 16:19-31*



64TH YEAR

OCTOBER 23, 2016

PAMPHLET # 43 (3308)

SELFISHNESS AND ADVANTAGE

In Modern Greek we have mixed up the meaning of these two words. And we tend to give a negative meaning to the word "advantage", which characterizes the benefit in every level, that we can reap either personally, or collectively, having every right for this. On the contrary, the word "selfishness", imprinting the priority of the individual advantage to the collective one, or rather enlisting the common benefit, is characteristically loaded with a negative meaning, which befits an egocentric and passionate person.

And this mindset of selfishness, being furthermore a pathology in the sick psyche of the contemporary person, spreads, being multiplied, like another cancerous cell, in an effort to affect even the healthiest elements of humanity. Unfortunately man, attached to material pursuits, is not able to distinguish his advantage, being subject to his selfishness, even if this leads to his self destruction. Thus, for short term personal benefits, he rejects the perspective of the advantage, even if it secures him unto eternity.

6TH SUNDAY OF LUKE
THE GOSPEL LUKE 8:26-39

At that time, as Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, there met him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no clothes and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me." For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.) Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them leave. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. When the herdsmen saw what happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gadarenes asked him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but he sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

The benefactor Christ

Such a great benefactor as our Christ did not exist on this earth. His aim, man's salvation and his deliverance from the bonds of death, of corruption, of sin, but also the offering of holiness as the unique quality which shows man forth as a Son of God by grace. The way of achieving all these things, is a peculiar cooperation between God and men, whose handling, the Church has undertaken throughout the centuries,. The presupposition, man's free affirmation of God. And we see all these things imprinted in today's gospel passage.

With a boat, Christ and His Disciples pass over to the area of the Gadarenes, to the opposite shore of Galilee. The first one who welcomes them, a wretched person, harshly tortured by the domination of the demons. The demons, recognizing the Godman, throw the possessed person, beseechingly at His feet, not to ask for his liberation, but for them to protest, that their time did not yet come to be cast out into the outermost Hades, since Christ had already given the command that they leave the person alone. And Christ, after first asking the man about his name and receiving the answer "legion", so that His disciples could understand, but also the students of His Gospel throughout time, the multitude of demons, allows them to escape to a herd of pigs that were grazing there, nearby. And after the demons left the person alone, they turned to the other creatures of God, who by a transgression of the Mosaic law, were being raised, they lead them to the precipice and drown them in the lake below, proving that the work of the demon is, in each case, the destruction either of the person, or of the creation, as a way of offending the work of God.

Christ with this double action of His - the liberation of the possessed fellow, but also of His condescension for the demons to take refuge in the pigs- benefits both the former possessed man, granting him his spiritual freedom, but also the right to an essential life, as well as the inhabitants of the area, correcting the conscientious transgression of the Law, without other consequences for them, granting them the opportunity to recoil stern and changing course of life, to give a new meaning to their relationship with God.

Selfishness and denial of Christ

How do the inhabitants of the area react to the double benefaction of Christ? With a courteous, it is true, manner they asked Christ to leave from their area, to pass its boundaries, and to not again to occupy Himself with them. They don't express thanksgiving for the fact that at least He delivered them from the former possessed man, without wanting to, was the scourge for the area, they don't ask forgiveness, nor do they try to justify themselves for the raising of the pigs, they merely ask "him to depart from them".