

the other hand, it gladdens". And Saint John Damascene explains: "God does not damn anyone. But each one has the freedom and the responsibility to make himself receptive or not to partake of the communion of God. Whoever freely chooses to accept the grace and the light of God, lives God as indescribable joy and delight. Whereas, on the contrary, whoever chooses to close the door to God, lives God, as unbearable damnation."

Christ absolutely respected the "courteous" request of the Gergesenes. He entered the boat and passed over to the opposite part of the lake, to Capernaum. We, scorning the destructive courtesies of the Gergesenes, let us dare to call Christ as often as we are able, not simply to remain in our land, but to be enthroned in our heart and body, repeating the prayer which we do before Divine Communion: "I'm approaching you, oh Christ, taking courage from your great goodness, so that I not be torn up by the noetic wolf, the devil, abstaining for a long period of time from your Divine Communion."

Archim. B.

**SUNDAY, JULY 1, 2018 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**, *Cosmas & Damian the Holy Unmercenaries Constantine the New Martyr of Cyprus, Aaron and Julius the Martyrs of Caerelon, Germanus, Bishop of the Isle of Man.*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Tone Fourth*

**EOTHINON :** *Fifth Orthros Gospel*

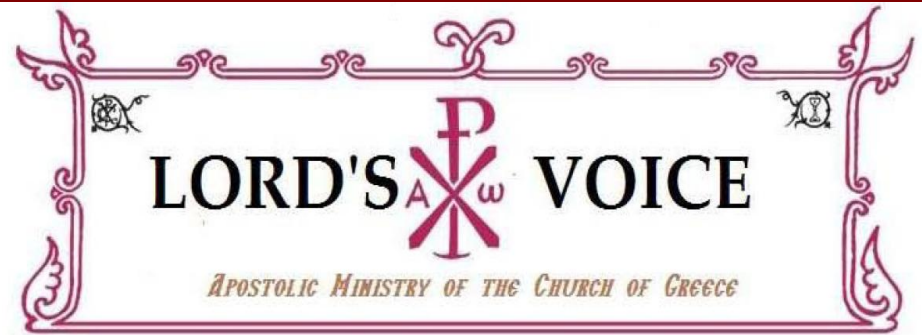
**EPISTLE READING:** *Corinthians 12:27-31; 13:1-8*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 8:28-34; 9:1*

**NEXT SUNDAY, JULY 1, 2018 6<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**, *The Holy Great Martyr Procopius, Theophilos the Myrrhbearer of Pantokrator Monastery, Appearance of the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Kazan.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *Romans 12:6-14*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 9:1-8*



**66<sup>TH</sup> YEAR JULY 1 2018 PAMPHLET #26 (3396)**

## **"DELIVER US FROM EVIL"**

The Evangelist Matthew describes two possessed people, whom Christ met in the country of the Gergesenes, with the words "very fierce", in other words, "very fearful and dangerous". So dangerous, that someone could not pass by the area where they lived.

### **The worst demon possession**

However, in what has been said, that the greatest success of the devil is to convince man that he does not exist, it should be added that an equally successful deceiving of man by the devil is the viewpoint that the possessed person is only he who is rolling on the ground producing foam from his mouth and gritting his teeth.

The tradition of the Church presents as demon-possessed, each person, who voluntarily was enslaved into some passion, no matter how small it seems. Because, as Saint John Chrysostom says, "even the sparrow even if it has been completely caught, but only by its little foot into the trap that they set for it, it is nevertheless in the authority of him who set the trap". And elsewhere, the Saint referring to the case of the person who is caught in the trap not by the foot but by his pocket, in other

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 8:28-34; 9:1

At that time, when Jesus came to the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one would pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood. And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city.

words, the avaricious person, he says: "in the case of the possessed people of the Gergesenes the demons yielded to the command of the Lord and came out immediately from the bodies of the people. The person however enslaved to avarice, does not even yield to Christ's commandment, not because he is stronger than Christ, but because Christ never makes us in our right frame of mind without our own will."

And the sacred Chrysostom concludes: "I would prefer to be living with 1000 possessed people, rather than with one suffering from this illness of avarice. What can all the possessed people together do, similar to that which Judas dared to do. If someone would clearly be able to see the demon who is inside such a person, he would ascertain that he is wilder and more raging than those who came out of the possessed people of the Gergesenes".

### **Whom does he give rest to and whom does he tyrannize?**

Consequently, the central gate of entrance of the demons into man are not the evil eyes, the curses or the sorceries which the others do to him – or usually he thinks that the others are doing to him –but the scorning on his part of God's commandments. The

replacement of "thy will be done" with "my will be done". Then, certainly, we give the devil "permission for vacations". The greatest cause of rest for the devil is for us to be doing our own wills, which do not agree with the will of God. Because then, as Abba Poimen says, "the demons cease fighting us, since our own wills become the demons. And these tyrannize and grieve us."

The demons are tyrannized, grieved and chased out only by the presence of Christ. And not only do they flee full of dread, but they seek His permission furthermore, even to enter into pigs. So nonexistent is their authority over God's creatures, and much more so to the rational creatures of God, who love Him and freely choose to seek His almighty protection. Consequently, after God, the greatest source of fear for the demons is the person, who rejoices repeating the psalm verse: "I always see the Lord standing at my right hand, so that I not be shaken by any danger or fear" (Psalm 15:8).

On the contrary, the more a person likes swirling in the filth of sinful pleasures, all the more "pig-like" –according to the golden-tongued John – he becomes, all the more "easily attackable" and vulnerable he ends up to the demonic energies, even if he does not end up completely demon-possessed.

### **Delight or hell?**

A similar suiting of the filth of the passions of pleasure-loving and avarice, made the inhabitants of the Gergesenes not endure Christ's presence in their area. And, instead of keeping Him as much as possible close to them thanking Him that He delivered them from the demonic tyranny of their two compatriots, they went and asked Him to leave. The delivering love of Christ, instead of enlightening them, was burning them. And naturally, for this reason, Christ was not to blame!

Abba Isaac the Syrian says that "the love of God is given indiscriminately to everyone. It acts however in two ways: it damns the sinners, on the one hand, while the righteous ones, on