

## The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 8:28-9:1

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told everything, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts. And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. (KJV)

In the current Gospel, two possessed by the devil blocked the passage way for travelers. Often the devil or those possessed by the devil block certain roadways in life.

Roadways blocked by the demon-possessed may prevent individuals from obtaining a desired job, a promotion or access to healthcare or other needed services. The situation in the Gospel changed for the better when Jesus took action.

The passage way was opened when the Lord Jesus Christ sent the devils into the herd of swine and they perished in the sea. The Gospel creates hope for individuals seeking to move forward beyond inhibiting barriers in life.

The Lord Jesus Christ opens the pathways for Christian development. The possibility for joy in life becomes obtainable through Jesus Christ. Taking the Gospel message seriously changes daily life.

Love for Jesus Christ increases the desire to know more about Christ and living in Christ. Jesus Christ's victory over the devil-possessed in the current Gospel serves as reassurance to believers.

Living in Jesus Christ involves putting faith in action. When moving forward in life, believers will be confronted with road blocks that appear unexpectedly. All challenges are best addressed through focusing on Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ does not disappoint those turning to Him in faith. Jesus Christ opens passage ways for growth. The present Gospel serves as lesson to strengthen personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Doubts will arise in life. Trepidation may arise from time to time. Reassurance and certainty exist with the Lord Jesus Christ. Staying focused on Christ and united with Christ enables believers to go forth in confidence.

In today's world many individuals face personal demons needing to be addressed and conquered for peace to occur. Peace is found in Jesus Christ. Personal demons are conquered through Christ.

The Church offers many prayers to address personal demons. The Church offers teachings on the value of prayer, fasting and almsgiving to address the demons in life.

The Divine services of the Church nourish, enrich and guide the believer from Holy Baptism until departure from this life. The journey from baptism until departure from this life will entail facing many demons.

When a person gives in to the terror of demons, growth in life is impeded, Growth in life stops when demons prevail. Deterioration in life occurs when the demons are in control.

When life is centered in Jesus Christ, obstacles to growth are overcome. The hunger in the soul is thoroughly addressed when Jesus Christ is primary in life. The Holy Gospel provides life's lessons to be applied in daily life.

Jesus Christ is readily available when demons appear and threaten to block personal growth. Praying directly to Jesus Christ and seeking intercession from the Mother of God and the saints makes improvement possible.

The Holy Apostle Paul made clear the nearness of the Lord. He said: "He be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being." (Acts 17:27-28.) The Apostle's words are reassuring of the nearness of the Lord.

The best way to verify the Lord's presence is to reach out in faith. Verification of the Lord's presence occurs in the Divine services of the Church. God is revealed in daily life, each day of life, when believers are attentive.

Hope and confidence in the Lord are bolstered when believers take the Gospel seriously and apply the Gospel to daily life. The Gospel is always relevant. God is always relevant and timely.

Life and the Church are to be inseparable. Each breath in life unifies the believer with the Lord God. Each heartbeat unifies the believer with the Lord. Viewing daily life in faith verifies the presence of the Lord.

Thank God for the presence of the Lord to open the blocked roadways of life. Thank God for the inherit power to overcome the demons of life. Thank God for the peace derived from God's overthrow of demons in life.

Take time to look for the presence of God in each moment of life. Take time to be thankful for God's love for each person. Pray always for life to be lived in ways pleasing to God.

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The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Andrew, Archbishop of Crete. Hieromartyr Sava of Upper Karlovac. July 4/July 17, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

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