

The Twenty Third Sunday after Pentecost  
Luke 8:26-39

And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. And when He went forth to land, there met Him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech Thee, torment me not. (For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that He would suffer them to enter into them. And He suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought Him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and He went up into the ship, and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought Him that he might be with Him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him. (KJV)

Serious believers certainly desire being at peace with God and persons in daily life. Wisdom from the Book of Proverbs states: “When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.” (Prov.16:7)

The Holy Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans addressed the issue of peace in personal relationships. The Apostle Paul's words are of lasting value to attentive believers.

The Romans were told by the Holy Apostle Paul: “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom.12:18) Today's Gospel is relevant to the message of personal peace with God and each other.

The Gospel focuses on the man tormented by many devils. The man's behavior and the way he lived reflected forces tormenting him, Self-examination reveals to believers unwanted thoughts, words and actions that arise from within.

We all say, think and do things at times that are not God pleasing. Apostle Paul put behavior in perspective to the Romans. He said: “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” (Rom. 7:15)

We are not perfect beings. We need the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ to bring ourselves into compliance with His teachings and expectations. Repentance and confession enable us to begin anew when we mess up.

The Lord Jesus Christ has the power to bring peace to our lives. Jesus Christ teaches and shows us how to get along with others. Jesus describes the way our relationships should be.

Each person is created in the image and likeness of God (Gen.1:27) The Lord Jesus Christ was explicit in saying the way we relate with each person is the relationship we have with Him. (Mt.25:31-46)

Mercy and forgiveness deserve to be foremost in our personal relationships. Christ's teachings and example on forgiveness and love are the foundation for personal relationships.

St. John's Epistle states: If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1John 4L20)

Jesus demonstrated in the present Gospel that He has the power over devils tormenting personal life. Jesus offers the certain hope for bringing internal peace to persons experiencing torment.

Each believer benefits from turning to and relying on Jesus Christ to improve daily personal relationships. Being focused on and united with Christ is the way to protect the self against unwanted thoughts, words and actions in daily life.

The soul hungers for Christ. The soul hungers for peace. Peace in the heart, mind and soul come from Jesus Christ. God's Holy Church proclaims the Gospel to nourish, inspire and educate believers.

Attentive believers seeking nourishment for the soul and desiring to grow in Christ take the Gospel to heart. Serious believers apply the Gospel messages to daily life. The Gospel transforms fervent believers' thoughts and actions.

Thank God hope exists for personal peace. Thank Jesus Christ for being the remedy against torments arising in life. Believers immersed in Christ become fortified against personal torment.

Jesus Christ is the healer and solution for personal torment. Jesus Christ is the victor over devils affecting daily life. Jesus Christ's love for each person is the deciding difference making peace possible.

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The Twenty Third Sunday after Pentecost. St. Milutin, King of Serbia. Venerable Theoctist and Helena; Confessor Varnava of Hvosno. October 30/November 12, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic