

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 entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go our into the 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)

God's Holy Church is now in the period of the Nativity Fast. God's mercy is present to begin anew in Christ. The Church provides this time to earnestly prepare for celebrating Jesus Christ taking on human flesh.

The Nativity Fast inspires serious believers to focus on the purity of the Mother of God. The Mother of God was chosen among all women of all centuries to give birth to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believers are challenged to live in purity in Jesus Christ from the time of Holy Baptism until departure from this life. Believers are expected to reject the temptations and the corruption in the world that are perilous to the soul.

The current Gospel proves the power of the Lord Jesus Christ over the devil. The devil seeks to corrupt the human soul. Believers taking the present Gospel seriously will turn to Christ to seek purity in their personal lives.

Repentance has a place throughout life. Believers often unwittingly and unintentionally corrupt their lives during daily living. The Church provides the Nativity Fast and other days of fasting for repentance and purification.

Jesus Christ is ever-present and within reach for believers seeking to live healthily. During the Nativity Fast serious believers consciously act on the desire to begin anew in Christ.

The Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ is worthy of great preparation. The Son of God taking on human flesh radically changed the world forever. The Church celebrates Jesus Christ taking on human flesh in the present each year.

The Church offers guidance and nourishment for humans from conception until departure from this life. The Church provides understanding of human life and the way to life eternal.

Nourishment and guidance exist in the Church for believers throughout life. The Lord Jesus Christ is alive and present in the Holy Mysteries of the Church. Unsurpassed and unending joy in Christ are always available.

The Nativity Fast is a time of discovery. Believers seeking to learn more about Jesus Christ and to grow in Christ consciously approach the Nativity Fast with seriousness and deliberate effort.

The Nativity Fast is an investment in the Kingdom of God. The effort invested in adhering to the Nativity Fast will be fully realized in the experience of the Feast of Christ's Nativity.

The Christ Child born to the Virgin Mary links heaven and earth. Jesus Christ's birth links the human with the eternal. The Christ Child is Perfect God and Perfect Human. Believers come to the Church to learn about and appreciate Jesus' birth.

From Baptism until departure from this life, believers are to grow in understanding and appreciation of Jesus taking on human flesh. The Nativity Fast is a time for believers to reject and crucify desires that are perilous to the soul.

Worldly undertakings seek to overshadow and draw believers away from the way of Jesus Christ. Commercialism and materialism entice humans to pursue a way of life having nothing to do with Jesus Christ.

Discipline, vigilance and repentance are necessary throughout life to remain faithful and united with Jesus Christ. Joy in Jesus Christ is possible when resolute faith exists and continues.

The Gospel strengthens and educates attentive believers. Today's Gospel assures believers of Jesus Christ's power over devils that impair human life. Believers need never fear in life and always have reason to hope in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is always present to allay anxieties arising in life over the threat of devils. Now is the time during the Nativity Fast to choose the life of purity and faithfulness in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ' Nativity is associated with unsurpassable joy in the world. Now is the time to commit to fully honoring the Nativity Fast. Today turn to Jesus Christ fully and reject any devils impairing personally living in Christ.

The Twenty Third Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Martyr Plato, Holy Martyr Romanus and Child Barulas. November 18/December 1, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

