

## **Sunday Sermon - 25th October 2020 by his Eminence Archbishop Serafim Of the Holy Greek Orthodox Archbishopric of Zimbabwe**



In today's Gospel reading, our Church puts forward the miraculous healing of the demon-possessed man of the Gadarenes.

In point of fact, Jesus Christ met a man outside the city, who for years had been ruled by demons and who used to wander around naked and sleep at the cemetery. In order for the members of his family to have peace of mind when he was home, it was customary for them to tie him up hand and foot. He was a dangerous man. Jesus Christ, as a compassionate God ordered the demons to depart from him and he is then set free, he becomes calm, mild of manner and he acquires his health. The demons with Christ's permission entered into a herd of swine, which rushed forward and drowned in the sea.

After a while, with the notification and dissemination of the unbelievable miraculous event, many people from the city and the nearby villages come to marvel at the event.

Every one of Christ's miracles, as with his entire teaching, have as their main

objective and intention to reveal the mystery of the coming of God's kingdom to the world-a kingdom where pain and misfortune have no place, neither do sorrows and illnesses, nor anguish and criminality or falsehood and hypocrisy, or poverty and misery and all the social evils of humanity as are the racial distinctions and daily conflicts.

Jesus Christ comes with His miracles and His teachings to point out to us that God's kingdom is a communion of God's love with mankind and a relationship of fellowship and co-existence of all the people, rich and poor, white and black, big and small, men and women ill and healthy.

God does not behave like people who only help their own and not those who do upset and embitter them. God loves and helps all of us. The Apostles also did these things. This is also what all our Saints did. This is also our daily responsibility, helping the people we meet in our lives.

Thus, the point where we are surprised at today's Gospel extract is not so much the healing of the demon-possessed man, but the behaviour of his fellow citizens towards Jesus Christ. One would expect them to approach him full of gratitude, to thank him, to keep him close to them, to bring Him also their other sick persons, to lay before him their pains and sins and to feel His presence amongst them as a blessing, as an invitation to follow the path of salvation. However, they do nothing of all these things.

In fact they do worse. They ask Jesus Christ to move away from them, they ask him to leave as soon as possible, they ask him to depart from the borders of their country. Why this malice/wonder, on the part of the Gadarenes? Perhaps because they see Christ as an obstacle to their sinful interests which they rely upon for their illegal profit. That is, in the exploitation of the other person through dishonorable means. In fact, a little while before, Jesus Christ having healed the demon possessed person, also condemned illegal profit, leading the heard of swine to the precipice which finally drowned in the sea. It is besides known from the Old Testament, that the law of Moses with wisdom in order to protect his fellow citizens from harmful diseases, expressly forbade the Jews from eating meat and nurturing swine.

They were not worthy to benefit from the presence of Jesus Christ. Thus they ask him to leave. Is it possible that the same story occurs in our life?

Jesus Christ asks us for love, honor, honesty, humility, patience, calmness, tranquility, every virtue, sacrifice and an offer of help to all who have need of us.

Many people differ little from the Gadarenes who dismissed Christ because many people of our time due to the passion of material gain find it difficult to understand that besides and above the illegal or legal material gain, there exists and extends the eternal gain of the soul, our eternal salvation through Christ.

Where the miracle happens, there exists great pain and the miracle aims precisely at the removal of the evil one which creates the pain. That demon-possessed man, the one whom the Gadarenes considered to be mad, was judged worthy to become a witness of God, he was worthy to have personal communication with Jesus Christ, he became worthy to teach the word of God, he managed to be saved.

The teaching of this event means that we must never in our life treat with contempt or underestimate whosoever. Oppositely, we must pray for every person offering him works of love because every person, irrespective of the impressions that we have of him, has been created "in the image of God." This means that in our positive encounter and in our relationship with every person, we encounter, we encounter God. This is why Christ pointed out to us that at the moment when we help our neighbor, we necessary in order to live a life which is not only better in this life but also in eternity, so that we can direct ourselves to the life of Paradise. At the same time never to forget about our moral responsibility to take care and to protect the whole Creation of God as a gift for the whole Humanity and for all the generations, sharing and assisting each other like the members of the Church in the first Christian community (Act 2,44). In this time as we are in the middle of the pandemic of the corona virus, we need this strong faith to our Lord Jesus Christ to protect ourselves and the whole community from the deathly threat.

— [Source](#)