

decisiveness are demanded. The Gergesenes do not remain in the confession that they have the Only-begotten Son and Word of God before them, but they are hurting for their lost pigs, which they were unlawfully breeding, so for this reason also, they were gaining great profit. The falling of the herd down the cliff, cost them, so for this reason also, instead of feeling the justice of their punishment, the injustice of their action, and the opportunity for their correction which God is granting them, they are stubbornly attached to the claiming and worshipping of wealth, rejecting Christ and His unique truth. For the sake of material possessions and the satisfaction of their desires, they turn a blind eye and reject the truth, chasing it away, thus becoming precursors of many people with similar desires, throughout the ages.

And the denial of the demons and the denial of the Gergesenes prove how much God's creatures turn a blind eye towards His very obvious truth, when they are overcome by egotism. Whether proud beliefs, or egocentric desires, enslave man so much, dissolving him, they obligate him to deny God, the cause of life and of love. So for this reason also, the quality of a Christian does not accept reconciling or condescension to whatever is earthly and base, but it is characterized by longing for freedom in the light of the truth of Christ.

Archimandrite I. N

**SUNDAY, JULY 24, 2016 5TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**, *Christina the Great Martyr of Tyre, Athenagoras the Apologist, Boris and Gleb, the Passion-bearers, Kapiton, Himenaos and Hermogenes, the Martyrs, Theophilus the New Martyr of Zakynthos*

**TONE OF THE WEEK: Fourth Tone**

**EOTHINON :** *Fifth Eothinon*

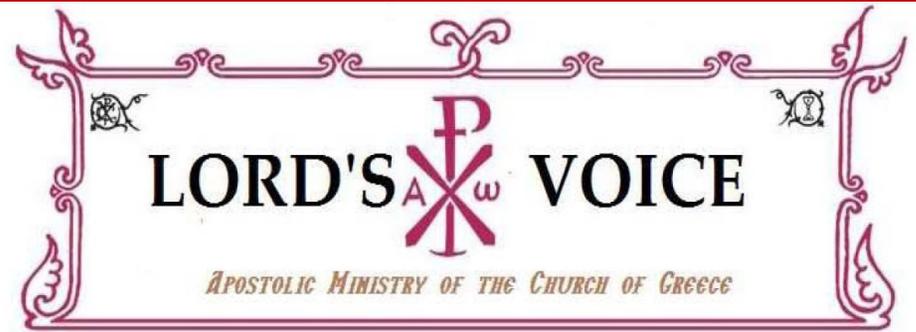
**EPISTLE: St. Paul's Letter to Romans 10:1-10**

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

**NEXT SUNDAY, JULY 31, 2016 6TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**, *Forefeast of the Precious Cross, Joseph the Righteous of Arimathea, Eudocimus the Righteous of Cappadocia, Dionysios the Righteous Martyr of Vatopaidi.*

**EPISTLE: St. Paul's Letter to Romans 12:6-14**

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



64<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

JULY 24, 2016

PAMPHLET # 30 (3295)

## EGOTISM AND TRUTH

One of the many things about which our age can boast, is the fact that there is dreadful confusion. Confusion of ideas, principles, habits which characterize people who are mixed up, undecided, passionate. Not the polyphony of knowledge, but the sour note of semi-learnedness, combined with a superficial and surface viewing of whatsoever matters, easily leads to animosities and such beliefs, which invalidate the truth in the eyes of man or even prevent him from accepting it.

Furthermore, the deification of man, his self idolizing and the gainful dealing of daily life, have essentially led to an unrestrained subjectivism. We've reached the point of each person accepting his personal belief as truth, not accepting the objective truth, but welcoming the whatsoever cacophonous teaching with itching ears, no matter how irrational and unacceptable it is, so long as it appears as modern or is projected as subversive. Probably never before in human history did sick irrationality prevail so much as in the age, self defined, as the age of logic.

### Christ and the demons

In today's gospel passage we see the strange dialogue between Christ and the demons which are torturing two troubled men in the land of the Gergesenes.

## 5TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

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

*At that time, when Jesus came to the other side, 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.*

Strange! Christ says merely one word: "Go", a sign that He's not asking, or leaving Himself to this dialogue, but He puts up with it, until He reaches to the desired result, the curing of the possessed people.

It is the demons who are speaking in this dialogue a lot, and they are saying many things which are odd. The most amazing thing of all, is that they're calling Christ, "Son of God". For many interpreters, especially Western ones of more recent years, this address proves, that these two people were truly possessed and not simply out of their mind or schizophrenic or more generally ill in soul. And this, because they are not saying irrational things or nonsensical babbling, but they are expressing clear knowledge about the divine nature of Christ, so for this reason also subsequently, the formulation of requests is analogous.

Of course, the above interpretation may be useful, the important thing however, in the demons' addressing, is the admission that Christ is the Only Begotten Son and Word of God incarnate. They recognize the Godhead and they confess it, simultaneously however, they are enmitous towards it, so for this reason also, they turn away from it. Disbelief is a phenomenon of humans. The devil and those "with him"

have no doubt about God, on the contrary, they have knowledge of God and communication with Him, regardless if their pride and egocentrism makes them incapable of admitting the divine truth and responding to divine love. While they inspire the same thing on earth and in many people. Many people, even though they sense the truth of faith, even though they admit the uniqueness of Orthodoxy, even though they're convinced in the preaching of the Church, they do not allow to themselves to externalize it in an attitude of life, in an ethos, in a practical confession, being bound to egotistical viewpoints or fearing the reaction of the "others".

### The attitude of the Gergesenes

But also the inhabitants of the nearby city have a noteworthy behavior. As soon as they are informed about the liberation of the possessed people from the slavery of the devil, and the destruction of the herd of pigs, they gather all together at the entrance of the city. Not in order to thank Christ for His benefaction to their fellow compatriots, as also the deliverance of the whole city from their attacking behavior, but in order to ask Him, with much respect and propriety, "that he go away from their borders".

And here some commentators focus more at the fact that the Gospel documents this rejection of the person of Christ and does not hide it, a proof of the narration's trustworthiness. If the Gospel was a human invention with the aim of whatsoever selfishness being hidden behind its composition, it would only document the events which would stress the power and the importance of Christ and His acceptance by people. The Gospels however, are not propagandistic texts, or narrative readings which are justified by some "happy ending". It is documentation of the revealed truth, as the Church received it from the infallible mouth of Christ, so for this reason also, they are true at every cost.

The most important thing however in the attitude of the Gergesenes, is that it reveals the reasons for the denial of the most of the deniers of Christ. And the reason for many people's denial, is that the principles of Christianity are not easy in their implementation. It has a cost, "it is not advantageous", so for this reason also, strength and