



# Weekly Bulletin

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Apostolic Faith in Lake County for over 42 Years

*Father Andrew Clements*, Pastor

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<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Nov 12</b>	<i>23rd Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 6 / St John the Merciful</i>
		9:00 am Church School
		10:00 am Divine Liturgy      Coffee Hour
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Nov 15</b>	<i>Beginning of Christmas Lent</i>
		7:00 pm Prefestal Vespers      Confession
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Nov 18</b>	<i>Martyrs Platon &amp; Roman</i>
		4:00 pm Confession
		5:30 pm Great Vespers      Confession
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Nov 19</b>	<i>24th Sunday after Pentecost / Tone 7 / Prophet Obadiah</i>
<b>NO CHURCH SCHOOL</b>		Readings: Eph 2:14-22      Luke 12:16-21
		9:00 am Divine Liturgy / Coffee / Turkey Distribution / Annual Meeting

**ATTENDANCE / STEWARDSHIP / Nov**

Attendance: (Adults 125, Children 27)	152
Operating	\$3,680.00
OCA Assessments	60.00
Uganda Children	109.00
Charities	88.00
Icons	145.00
Other	50.00

**TUESDAY EVENING ADULT CLASS**

The Class will meet this Tuesday, Nov 14 at 7:00 pm. to continue our study.

**COUNCIL MEETING**

Thursday, Nov 16 at 7:00 pm.

**CONFESSION NOTE**

Christmas Lent begins this Wednesday, Nov 15. Confession is in order for everyone during this season, so please note the extra times scheduled and approach in a timely manner.

**ANNUAL MEETING**

Sunday, Nov 19 after a brief Coffee Hour. Liturgy will be at 9:00 am on this Sunday. Our main New Business will be to approve the new Parish Bylaws which will be sent to everyone shortly in your email.

**TURKEY PROJECT**

Please sign up in the foyer and pick up your Shopping List and bags. Turkeys will be available Sunday, November 19th for distribution. Please direct questions

to Jim and Lisa Gordon.

**ST NICHOLAS CELEBRATION**

On Sunday, Dec 3 we will have our St Nick's celebration. Please sign up in the foyer for the items you will bring to the Potluck. Cash donations are also welcomed. Also, please let Paula Tintor know how you can help out with set-up, clean-up, etc.

**PRAYER CORNER + + + + +**

Eleanor Alexander (Tom's mom), Perry (Capitan), Sbdcn Leonard, Kathy (Denise F's sis), Jim (Ruth's dad), Michael (Chongris nphw), Ted Geletka, (Fr's frnd), Russ Bechkowiak, Connie (Linda D's frnd), Alex Dzura, infant Julian, John Clements, Willie (Elena G's son), suffering Christians in Ukraine and the Middle East.

**Anniversaries:** David & Michelle Schroeder (11/12), Dennis & Gloria Hocevar (11/15).

**Birthdays:** Tom Alexander, Natalie Antinov (11/12), Luanne Dzura (11/16), Eric Clouse (11/17).

**Newborns:** Sophia (Tom & Stephanie) Emma (John & Lauren).

**Expecting:** Brian & Nicole, Cole & Sarah, Matt & Krista, James & Lisa.

**Our Seminarian:** Brian Crivella & Family.

**Our Missionaries:** Peter & Sharon.

# Image of True Discipleship: The Gadarene Deoniac

by Fr Stephen Kostoff

One of the most challenging narratives in the Gospels is the healing of the Gadarene demoniac [Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-39]. This dramatic event, which reveals the power of Christ over the demons, will appear to the 21st century mind as either archaic or even primitive. We may listen with respect and sing “Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!” upon the completion of the reading, but “wrapping our minds” around such a narrative may leave us baffled, if not shaking our heads. The spectacle of a man possessed by many demons, homeless and naked, living among the tombs, chained so as to contain his self-destructive behavior, is not exactly a sight that we encounter with any regularity, to state the obvious. (Although we should acknowledge that behind the walls of certain institutions, we could witness to this day some horrible scenes of irrational and frightening behavior from profoundly troubled and suffering human beings). Add to this a herd of swine blindly rushing over a steep bank and into a lake to be drowned, and we must further recognize the strangeness of this event. This is altogether not a part of our world!

Yet, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of the narrated event, which does appear in three of the Gospels, though with different emphases and details—in fact there are two demoniacs in Saint Matthew’s telling of the story! It is always instructive to compare the written account of a particular event or body of teaching when found in more than one Gospel. This will cure us of the illusion of a wooden literalism as we will discover how the four evangelists will present their gathered material from the ministry of Jesus in somewhat different forms. As to the Gadarene demoniac, here was an event within the ministry of Christ that must have left a very strong impression upon the early Church as it was shaping its oral traditions into written traditions that would eventually come together in the canonical Gospels. This event was a powerful confirmation of the Lord’s encounter and conflict with, and victory over, the “evil one.” The final and ultimate consequence of that victory will be revealed in the Cross and Resurrection.

Whatever our immediate reaction to this passage, I believe that we can recognize behind the dramatic details the disintegration of a human personality under the influence of the evil one, and the reintegration of the same man’s personhood when healed by Christ. Here was a man that was losing his identity to a process that was undermining the integrity of his humanity and leading to physical harm and psychic fragmentation. I am not in the process of offering a psychological analysis of the Gadarene demoniac because I am ill-equipped to do so and I do not believe that we can “reduce” his horrible condition to psychological analysis. We are dealing with the mysterious presence of personified evil and the horrific effects of that demonic presence

which we accept as an essential element of the authentic Gospel Tradition. The final detail that indicates this possessed man’s loss of personhood is revealed in the dialogue between himself and Jesus.

“Jesus then asked him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Legion,’ for many demons had entered him” [8:30].

To be named in the Bible is to receive a definite and irreducible identity as a person. It is to be “someone” created in the “image and likeness of God.” It is the role of the evil one to be a force of disintegration. The “legion” inhabiting the man reveals the loss of his uniqueness and the fragmentation of his personality. Such a distorted personality can no longer have a “home,” which is indicative of our relational capacity as human beings, as it is indicative of stability and a “groundedness” in everyday reality. The poor man is driven into the desert, biblically the abode of demons. Once again, we may stress the dramatic quality of this presentation of a person driven to such a state, but would we argue against this very presentation as false when we think of the level of distortion that accompanies any form of an “alliance” with evil—whether “voluntary or involuntary?” Does anyone remain whole and well-balanced under the influence of evil? Or do we rather not experience or witness a drift toward the “abyss”?

Then we hear a splendid description of the man when he is healed by Christ! For we hear the following once the demons left him and entered into the herd of swine and self-destructed (the ultimate end of all personal manifestations of evil?).

“Then the people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid” [8:35].

“Sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.” This is clearly one of the most beautiful descriptions of a Christian who remains as a true disciple of the Master. This is the baptized person who is clothed in a “garment of salvation” and who is reoriented toward Christ, the “Sun of Righteousness.” The image here is of total reintegration, of the establishment of a relationship with Christ that restores integrity and wholeness to human life. It is also an image of peacefulness and contentment. Our goal in life is to “get our mind right,” which describes repentance or that “change of mind” that heals all internal divisions of the mind and heart as it restores our relationship with others. Jesus commands the man “to return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you” [8:39]. We, too, have been freed from the evil one “and all his angels and all his pride” in baptism. In our own way, perhaps we too can also proclaim just how much Jesus has done for us [cf. 8:39].