

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jan 29th 2024

One man vs. 2000 pigs

In today's Gospel, Jesus goes into the country of the Gerasenes and is confronted by a man with an unclean spirit who is chained and living among the tombs. The tortured man calls himself a Legion, for there are "many" in him.

A person who lives in sin is subject to the influence of evil forces. Often, people are unaware of how severe their condition is. Jesus, however, goes in search of the possessed man to free him. The only thing Jesus could do in this region was to free the man from the devil, and then he was forced to leave their shores. It appeared as if his only purpose of crossing over the sea was to save this man from demons. Could this not be the image of a shepherd searching for his lost sheep until he finds it and returns to his flock?

Our hearts are made for God, and we long for Him. Yet, we shy away from accepting God's precepts, not wanting God to touch us and upset our familiar and comfortable ways of living. Thus, we find a double internal movement: a movement toward God as well as away from God. Therefore we too feel like a legion, pulled apart by many conflicting movements within us.

A conflict of movement must have also been felt by the townspeople in today's gospel. They may have been happy for the healing of the man but were upset over the loss of their pigs and, therefore, wanted Jesus to leave. The healing touch of Jesus would require us to give up what is dear to us, but are we willing to do so?