



Sunday Bulletin October 25, 2020
Greek Orthodox Church of the
Annunciation

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**Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis, Presiding Priest-
Proistamenos**

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**Epistle Reading      Galatians 1:11-19**

Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

**Gospel Reading      Luke 8:26-39**

At that time, as Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, there met him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no clothes and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me." For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.) Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them leave. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. When the herdsmen saw what happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. Then 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. And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gadarenes asked him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but he sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

### ***Message from Fr. Michael....***

Dear Beloved Faithful:

In today's gospel reading, we see that the Lord is greeted by a demoniac. The demoniac views the Lord, Jesus, as the Son of God and worried what Jesus might do to him. The man who approached the Lord was possessed by a multitude of demons rather than just one. We recognize that sinners are really slaves of Satan, as Scripture teaches. Such individuals are led down a path leading to spiritual doom. If we stop and contemplate what it means to be demon possessed, we recognize that his man was deprived of reason. The man did not know who he was, where he was, or what he was doing. Unfortunately, unbelievers are committed to being oblivious or in denial of their own reason. This leads to persistent stubborn denial of God's truth. These poor lost souls are compelled to adhere to contradictions and even attempt to rationalize irrational views. In the gospel reading, the demoniac was deprived of his own will. This unbelieving demoniac was deprived of fellowship and cast out of his community. Once we become demonically possessed, and become a non-believer, we become separated from the covenants of promise. As we witnessed, through listening to the gospel reading, the demoniac was deprived of his dignity. He remained naked for a long period of time. The non-believer lives in a primitive and animal-like state, seeking to satisfy basic needs for survival now and nothing more. Such individuals have no concern for everlasting life... no concern for salvation. The demoniac was deprived of being himself. We recognize the symbolism when we hear the story of this demoniac living amongst the tombs. This non-believing demoniac was dead in sin. He was dead due to his trespasses.

We must realize that there is no more hope for those that simply live apart from Christ and those who are fully demonically possessed. However, there is hope for such individuals. In verse 35, we read: "And they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting down at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened." When we live apart from the Lord, we suffer from deprivations. Such individuals are on the path leading to Hell. That is the plan Satan desires for such individuals. They may be restored by Christ as we heard of the demons had gone out of the young man. He was then found sitting at the feet of our Lord, clothed and in his right mind. When we come to the Lord, after being away from Him, we are no longer naked or deprived. We are only then in our right mind since it is irrational to be away from Him.

May we now come back to the Lord, if we have drifted away. May we regain our rationality by coming back to the Author of Life who promises everlasting life! May His blessing be upon us so that we may return back on track and give God the glory!

Prayerfully in His service,

+Fr. Michael

## 6th Sunday of Luke

### Tabitha, who was raised from the dead by Peter the Apostle



### Chrysaphios (or Chrysaphos) the Martyr

### The Holy Martyrs Marcian and Martyrius the Notaries

These Martyrs were disciples of Saint Paul the Confessor (see Nov. 6). Martyrius was a subdeacon, Marcian a chanter and reader. They were beheaded by the Arians in the year 346. Miracles were wrought at their tomb, and demons were cast out; Saint John Chrysostom began the building of the church in their honour in Constantinople, and it was completed by patriarch Sisinius.

## Wisdom of the Fathers

For if we, going about on the earth which is familiar and well known to us, being encompassed with a body, when we are journeying in a strange road, know not which way to go unless we have some one to lead us; how should the soul, being rent away from the body, and having gone out from all her accustomed region, know where to walk without one to show her the way?

### St. John Chrysostom

Homily 28 on Matthew 8, 4th Century

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS...**that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Ted Simon, John Gianakos, Maria Lambrinos, Steve Anastos, Angelo Romas, and Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon. Please notify Fr. Michael if you have anyone else who should be included for special prayers. May they be under the grace and tender watch of our Lord.

*Some say, 'Why do they [demons] possess people?' I answer those who wish to have this explained that the reason of these things is very deep. Somewhere one of His saints addressed God by saying, 'Your judgments are a vast abyss.' As long as we bear this in mind, we will perhaps not miss the mark.*

### **St. Cyril of Alexandria**

Commentary on Luke, Homily 44. (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture; vol 3: Luke, Intervarsity Press)

*When you see life's pleasures, beware that they might not distract you, for they conceal death's snares. Likewise a fisherman casts not his hook to no purpose. As bait for his hook, the enemy uses the delusion of sensuality to arouse desire, that he might thereby catch men's souls and subject them to himself. A soul which has been caught to serve the enemy's will then serves as a snare for other souls, for it conceals the grief of sin with its apparent delight.*

### **St. Ephraim the Syrian**

A Spiritual Psalter no 43, pg. 74, 4th century

*Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "ANTIDORON" (blessed bread) which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast" that followed worship in the early Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. We hope that you will return often to worship with us, to grow in Christ and in our Orthodox Faith. For any spiritual, religious, or sacramental matters, please contact Fr. Michael (607) 795-1474. For all other matters, please notify Fr. Michael or a member of the parish council. Deadline for suggestions to the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.*