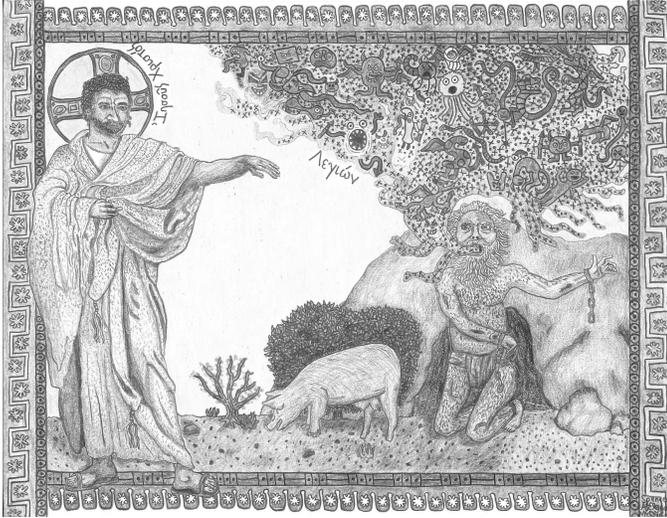




# The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

Sunday, October 31, 2021: 19th Sunday after Holy Pentecost, Hieromartyr Archpriest John Kochurov



## Hymns for Today

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life immortal,  
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead.  
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all  
the powers of heaven cried out: "O Giver of life, Christ  
our God, glory to Thee!"

Thou wast revealed to all as a true shepherd O  
Hieromartyr John of Chicago, for thou didst nurture thy  
people in the Orthodox Faith, guiding them by word and  
deed on the path of salvation, and defended the Faith  
even unto the shedding of thy blood. Therefore we thy  
spiritual children cry out in thanksgiving: "Glory to Him  
Who gave thee strength! Glory to Him Who granted thee  
the Martyr's crown! Glory to Him Who through thee  
grants mercy to all!"

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior, seeing the miracle  
of Thy Resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose!  
Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee,  
and the world, my Savior, praises Thee forever.

Now the holy Hieromartyr is glorified, for he took up his  
cross and followed Christ. In so doing, he gave us a model  
of true discipleship. Therefore, let us cry aloud to him:  
"Rejoice, O Father John, the glory of priests!"

## Epistle Reading - 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is  
blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus  
the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the  
city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest  
me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in  
the wall, and escaped from his hands. It is doubtless not  
profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and  
revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who  
fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know,  
or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows –  
such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know  
such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do  
not know, God knows – how he was caught up into  
Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not  
lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of  
myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For  
though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I  
will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should  
think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from  
me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the  
abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was  
given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be  
exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded  
with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.  
And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My  
strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most  
gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the  
power of Christ may rest upon me.

## Gospel Reading - Luke 8:26-39

Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which  
is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land,

**DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS:** A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!

there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

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## *This Week's Schedule*

### THIS WEEKEND

**SAT, Oct 30th:** Great Vespers @ 5 PM

**Fall Youth Costume Party @ 6 PM**

**SUN, Oct 31st:** Hours @ 8:40 AM,

Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour, Church School,

**Community Outreach Meeting (All Welcome)**

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### THIS WEEK

**WED:** Church Open for Private Prayer 11 AM-1:30 PM

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### NEXT WEEKEND

**SAT, Nov 6th:** Great Vespers @ 5 PM

**SUN, Nov 7th:** Hours @ 8:40 AM,  
Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour, Church School,  
**Youth Pancake Breakfast**

**NOTE:** On Sunday, Nov 7th Fr. Innocent will be serving at St. Michael's in Old Forge. As administrator of St. Michael's, Fr. Innocent will be making this one-time visit to meet with the parish. Fr. Stephen Kopestansky will be serving at Holy Trinity.

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## **Upcoming Parish Events & Announcements**

**THIS SUNDAY, Community Outreach Meeting:** Sunday, October 31st following Coffee Hour all are welcome to meet and discuss how Holy Trinity can effectively minister to those in need in our area. Come with ideas and a heart for serving Our Lord through the needy according to His words: *For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink.*

**Election Day Food Sale** – November 2 – 9 AM to 5 PM (or until the food runs out). Menu items: Clam chowder, chicken tortellini soup, piggy soup and porketta sandwiches. Pre-orders for Holy Trinity parishioners will be available. Volunteer sign-up in the vestibule.

**Maintenance Meeting** – Tues, Nov 2nd @ 6 PM

**Finance Committee Meeting** – Wed, Nov 3rd @ 6 PM

**Pierogi Project** – A possible Pierogi Project is currently slated for 12 & 13 November. As everyone knows we need as many volunteers as possible to help with this fundraiser. A sign-up sheet is posted in the vestibule so please try and give a few or more hours of time to help with this popular fundraiser. Should there not be enough we may need to postpone or cancel this project. Parishioners will have the opportunity to pre-order in advance of outside orders.

**Parish Council Meeting** – Sun, Nov 14th @ 11:30 AM

**Special Parish Meeting** – (2022 Budget discussion & vote) – Sun, Nov 28th following Coffee Hour

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## Birthdays & Anniversaries

**November Birthdays:** Scott Harvey (11/4), Matushka Melanie Neal (11/4), Irene Dutko (11/5), Fred Pleban (11/6), Steve Nealon (11/10), Joli Dutko (11/12), Andrew Neal (11/24) Douglas Cardoni (11/26) **Anniversaries:** Peter & Paula Holoviak (11/12), Steve & Jean Hutz (11/19), Michael Talpash (11/22)

**This Week's Birthdays:** Scott Harvey (11/4), Matushka Melanie Neal (11/4), Irene Dutko (11/5), Fred Pleban (11/6)

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**PARISH PRAYER LIST Living:** Cynthia Dulsky, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Nadine Breisch, Rosalie Bagenski, Sonja & Leanne Kay, Josie Bissett, Lisa & Scott Harvey, Daniel & Shannon Bissett, Delores Karas, Antonette Terry, Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Violet Filipi, Catherine, Danny Gobish, Lorraine Pace, Camden Thomas, Peter Holoviak & Family, Marni Bachman & Family, Rose Marie, Helen Gudaitis, Mahaffey Family, George Scott, Evelyn Kosmiski, Joe Sloan, Louis Gianuzzi, Betty Serafin, Matushka Elizabeth, Karen Maier, John Metz, Bill & Chris, Leigh Remp, Dn Gabriel Aldgride & Family **Departed:** Jerald Cobb, Rob Aldridge

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## On the Gergesene Demoniacs

By Met. Anthony Bloom

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

How familiar is this story to us. Yet every time we read it we rediscover something in it which touches our heart, or gives a new light to our mind. And to-day I would like to attract your attention to three features of this passage.

The first is the attitude of the devils, of the powers of evil, to their victims. The powers of evil have no other intention or desire than to take possession of a living creature and to make it both a sufferer and one that will fulfil their will. The Fathers of the Church teach us that the devils can have no direct action in this world; all they can do is enslave human beings and through them work



the evil within them. So this is what these powers of evil had intended: to enslave these men and to make them instruments of destruction, but at the same time to make them suffer for it.

When Christ commanded them to leave their victims they cried, shall I say, for a place of refuge, a place where they could dwell and work destruction. And Christ allowed them to in-dwell the pigs. Pigs, in the eyes of Jews, were a symbol of impurity; the request to be lodged in their bodies was a sign for all who could understand - and every Jew could - that they were as impure as the impurest of the animals. But what happened next was a demonstration to people of what happens when we allow ourselves to be possessed of evil, when we allow passions to have power over us - hatred, lust, jealousy, and all the passions of body and soul. Being possessed by them we are doomed to destruction, as this herd ended in death.

We should remember this because we do not always realise how much we are in the grip, in the power of those things which rule our life: likes and dislikes, hatreds, resentments and so on. We are not only possessed, but we are also working evil through our subjection to the power of evil. And the warning is clear: if we only allow evil to take possession of us completely, it will mean death; not physical death, but a total, tragic alienation from all that is life: from God, from love, from beauty, from meaning. We cannot fall out of existence but we can be possessed of an existence which is a ghostly one, an existence without life, without content - a shell that is empty, and yet a torment.

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And in contrast to this we see the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God become Man. He is the Creator, He is the Lord, He is the Saviour of the whole world; and He forgets everything, as it were, the whole of creation to pay attention to nothing but these two men who are in need of salvation, indeed He is prepared to leave ninety-nine righteous, whole people who do not need Him at that moment alone in order to give all His attention, all His life, indeed all His power to save these two men. In the face of all the need of the world He can see every individual need and respond to it with all His love, all His compassion, all His understanding and all His divine power to save and to heal.

There is a third group of people whom we see in action in this Gospel story; it is the inhabitants of the country. They had known of the desperate condition of these two men; they were told of what Christ did for them; they were told who their master was, who was their tormentor; should they not have come to give glory to God and thank Him for delivering the two men from the power of evil? NO! All they saw in the act of Christ was that they were deprived of their herd of swine. What mattered to them the wholeness and the life and the salvation of these two men? They were deprived of what was important to them, what mattered to them more than a human life, and they asked Christ to leave their borders, to go because they did not want to risk another miracle that would be costly to them. What a tragic - not monstrous, but just tragic contrast between the attitude of God and the attitude of these people.

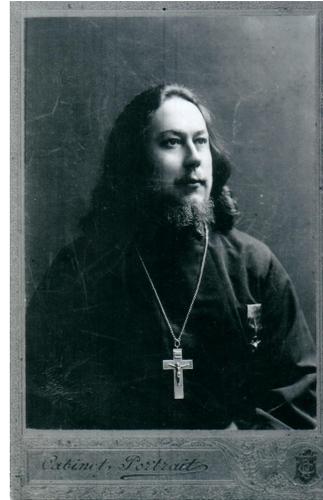
Let us give thought and ask ourselves, where do we stand? Of course, the first movement we shall have is to say, 'On God's side' - it is not true. When there is a tragic need, and the cost of helping would be perhaps not a disaster but a pain or loss to us, what would we choose? Let us reflect on this: are we really on the side of Christ Who can forget the whole world because His Heart is pierced, transfixed with compassion, or - do we allow our heart to be moved one moment, and then recalculate the cost and turn away from the need?

Let us reflect - because every one of these stories, every parable, every image, every act of God is challenging us: Where do you stand? Who are you? The person possessed, to whatever extent? A disciple of Christ ready to forget everything for the sake of a desperate need? Or rather one of those who say to Christ: Go, go away - you are disturbing our peace, the harmony of our life and our security?

Let us reflect deeply; but not only reflect, take a decision and act. Amen.

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## Today's Saints: St. John Kochurov of Chicago



Saint John Kochurov was the first priest of the many hundreds who were martyred during the Soviet period in Russia. He was given the name of St. John of Chicago because he was one of a number of young educated priests who came to the United States in the late 1890's as Orthodox missionaries for the newly arrived Eastern European immigrants. He was active in establishing parishes and aiding Orthodox

communities, mainly in the Midwest. For health reasons and concern for his children's education, he returned to Russia in 1907. Because of his teaching skills learned in the United States and his ability to relate to high school students, he was assigned to teach catechism in Narva, Estonia. Then in 1916, he was transferred to St. Catherine's Cathedral in Tsarskoe Selo, a suburb of St. Petersburg. At St. Catherine's, he established himself as a popular priest who was skilled in presenting moving sermons.

In October 1917 the Bolshevik uprising in St. Petersburg spilled over quickly into Tsarskoe Selo. The people thronged to the churches where the clergy held prayer services and led processions throughout the town praying for peace. On October 31, 1917, Fr. John was arrested and taken by the Bolsheviks out of town where he was summarily shot. By this act, Fr. John became the First Priest Martyr of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet yoke. Fr. John was buried several days later in the crypt of St. Catherine's Cathedral. His martyrdom is commemorated both on October 31<sup>st</sup> and January 25<sup>th</sup>, the feast of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, which is the date of the martyrdom of Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev in the Ukraine.