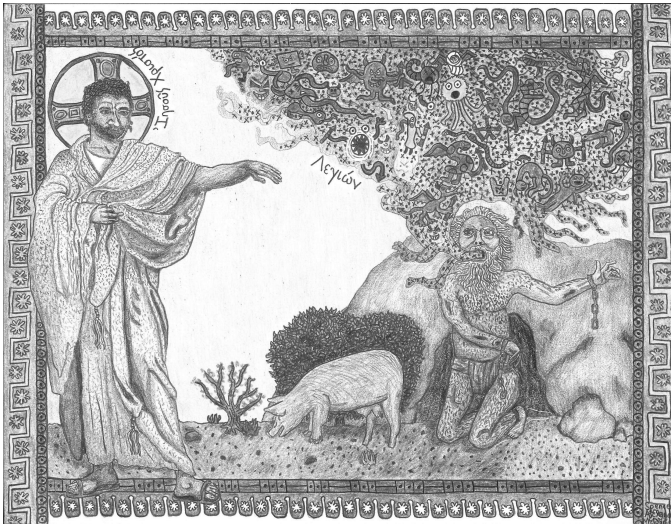




The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

+ 21st Sun after Pentecost + Sun, October 29th, 2023 + Monastic Martyr Anastasia of Rome (3rd c.)



Hymns for Today's Service

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: "Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!"

Thy lamb Anastasia calls out to Thee, O Jesus, in a loud voice: "I love Thee, my Bridegroom, and in seeking Thee I endure suffering. In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in Thee, and I died so that I might live with Thee. Accept me as a pure sacrifice, for I have offered myself in love." Through her prayers save our souls, since Thou art merciful!

The image of God was truly preserved in thee, O Father, for thou didst take up the Cross and follow Christ. By so doing, thou taughtest us to disregard the flesh for it passes away; but to care instead for the soul, for it is immortal. Therefore thy spirit, venerable Abramius, rejoices with the angels.

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master, He has risen on the third day!

Purified by the waters of virginity, righteous Anastasia, thou wast crowned by the blood of martyrdom. Thou dost grant healing and salvation to those in need, and who call on thee from their hearts, for Christ gives thee strength, pouring out on thee ever-flowing grace.

Thou didst live in the flesh on earth as an angel, and through thine ascetic life thou didst become like a tree nourished by the waters of abstinence and didst flourish. Thou hast washed away stains with the streams of thy tears and so thou hast been revealed, O Abramius, to be a God-like vessel of the Spirit.

Please Sing Along!

Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies along with the choir throughout the Divine Liturgy is encouraged!

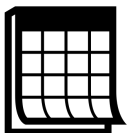
Epistle Reading - Galatians 2:16-20

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

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!

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, 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.



This Week's Schedule Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

THIS WEEKEND

Saturday, October 28th

5 PM: Vigil (Vespers & Matins), Confessions

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Sunday, October 29th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,
Coffee Hour (Parish Potluck), *Church School in the Nave*

Oct 29th / 4-8 PM: Orthodox Youth of NEPA

Potluck & Games at the Pavillion

TONIGHT! SEE YOU THERE

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THIS WEEK

WED 11 AM - 1:30 PM: Private Prayer in Church

6:30 PM: Akathist: "*Glory to God for all Things*"

THURS 11 AM: NO Bible Study

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NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, November 4th

5 PM: Great Vespers, Confessions

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Sunday, November 5th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy,
Coffee Hour, Church School, Parish Council



ANNOUNCEMENTS & Upcoming Parish Events

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Parish Council is the second Sunday of each month. Our next meeting is one week early, November 5th.

Friends of the Poor is the second Saturday of each month. The next gathering will be November 11th.

Parish Potlucks are usually the last Sunday of each month. Our next potluck is TODAY!

TONIGHT - ORTHODOX YOUTH OF NEPA will host games at the Holy Trinity Pavillion on Sunday, October, 29th from 4-8 PM. There will be Ping Pong, Foosball, card and board games, along with a potluck meal. If you have not signed up in the vestibule you are still welcomed to come. Bring a dish to share if you can. Because of all the rain in the forecast we will not have a bonfire (unless it clears up).

NOV 12th – ANNUAL HARVEST DINNER

Dear Parish Family – Once again it is time for our annual Harvest Dinner, a Thanksgiving all-you-can-eat family style meal with Turkey and all the fixins! The dinner will be Sun, Nov 12th following coffee hour. Pavilion doors will open at 11:30 AM for cocktails with the feast beginning at Noon. Drinks include soda and water. BYOB for wine and beer.

The *recommended* donation per adult is \$25: under 7 years old – free; 7-12 years old – \$5. If you are not able to pay the recommended donation price, please donate what you can or see Fr. Innocent for a complimentary ticket. Anyone wishing to attend please sign up in the vestibule by Nov 4th OR or call Deborah Mills at 570-822-5975 between Oct 30 – Nov 4th. Payment can be left at the candle stand or sent to the rectory. Write “Harvest Dinner” and the number of people attending on the memo line.

In an effort to make this year’s Harvest Dinner possible for everyone we have cut the ticket price to below cost and made it “*recommended*” so that everyone can attend this festive community meal. If you wish, you can help supplement the cost of this meal for others in three ways. 1) Give beyond the recommended donation 2) Sponsor a ticket for someone else – See Fr. Innocent 3) OR make a monetary donation to sponsor a food item – suggestions would include \$35 (Turkey), \$25 (Potatoes), \$25 (Yam Casserole), \$25 (Misc), \$20 (Veggies & Rolls) – See Diane or Sandy.

Don’t miss this wonderful time together to give thanks!

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

NOVEMBER Birthdays: Scott Harvey (11/4), Matushka Melanie Neal (11/4), Irene Dutko (11/5), Anya Nealon (11/8), Steve Nealon (11/10), Joli Dutko (11/12), Matt Austin (11/16), John Goobic III (11/19), Andrew Neal (11/24), Douglas Cardoni (11/26) **Anniversaries:** Steve & Jean Hutz (11/19), Michael & Lisa Talpash (11/22)

This Week’s Birthdays & Anniversaries: Scott Harvey (11/4), Matushka Melanie Neal (11/4)



Words of Wisdom From the Saints & Teachers

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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.

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.

The Treasury

“... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

<p>Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$12,305 Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: \$2,840 Collections last Sunday (10/22): \$2,213</p>
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