

Wednesday's Gospel: Jesus Arrives in Time

Gospel for Wednesday in the
13th Week of Ordinary Time,
and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 8:28-34*)

When Jesus came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the

demons begged him, “If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine.” And he said to them, “Go.”

So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood.

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Commentary

With Jesus on board the boat, we have reached the other shore of the Sea of Galilee and accompanied him to Gadara, a land of the Gentiles. There too our Lord wants to bring the Good News. And closely united to

Him, we witness with shock as two men possessed by demons confront Him with fury. The demons don't understand what it means to say that God is Love (cf. *1 Jn* 4:16). Nor do they know that the Heart of Jesus embodies that Love for all humanity. But what they do realize is that this Man is a powerful exorcist, and that many demons have already submitted to his power. They have raged furiously when they have seen Him defend people from the power of evil and win out. Jesus has come "before the time" foreseen in God's plans to overcome evil definitely.

The two men are freed from the demons, who are allowed to possess a herd of pigs – animals considered impure in Jewish law. But each human being is called to purity, to holiness; the human body is not meant to be a home for demons. Therefore Jesus exercises all his power to free those men. For them,

for every man and woman, our Lord will give his life on the Cross, rescuing us from sin and the power of the evil one. From his open Heart will flow blood and water to purify the world.

Along with our wonder at seeing these men freed from evil, we are saddened at the rejection of Jesus by the inhabitants of Gadara. For them, the exorcism is also a harsh reproach. They had turned their backs on the two possessed men, and failed to do anything to try to help them. If ever in our own lives, when faced with the suffering of others, we are tempted to turn our back and look away, let us go to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for from there flow “inexhaustible treasures of love, of mercy, of affection.”^[1] And we will be able to help heal the wounds of this world, to be merciful like our heavenly Father (cf. *Lk 6:36*).

^[1] Saint Josemaría, *Christ is Passing*
By, no. 162.

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