

*"What have you to do with me, Jesus,
Son of the Most High God?" (Luke 8:26-39)*



We are somehow surprised at the familiarity with which the evil spirit talks to Christ. The evil spirit knows who Jesus was and prays for itself. It certainly shows no concern for the human being it dehumanized and no remorse. There is no sign of regret for tormenting the young man. That is not even brought into discussion. Somehow, the spirit assumes or rather knows that its plea is not dependant on its repentance. God is merciful and His mercy is touching all. Those who repent and those who don't. It knows who Christ is but does not want to have anything to do with Him. "What have you to do with me?" The evil spirits, as we find out as the story develops, are concerned only with the abyss in which they don't want to enter before the end of time, where the presence of Christ will torment them. Now they want to keep a distance. So, for them there is time, where you can torment, possess others, and get away with it, because in Truth, Christ is merciful, and His mercy can be used against Himself. They can lie to others that God does not care but use the truth of mercy against God. There is time for them to refuse to enter into a relationship with the Creator of all while yet appealing to His mercy. We can now see and understand better the logic of the evil spirits. And so, we have to be attentive...

*"I will confess mine iniquities before the Lord against myself.
And Thou forgavest the ungodliness of my heart." (Ps 32:5)*

However, who else would have approached a demonized person with love? With the intention of entering a relationship with him. And we see that, after the healing, the young man is ready for communion with God. He was longing for this communion while being tormented by the evil spirits. He is ready to follow Him. He is so much open to God that he accepts to be obedient to Christ even though that meant to let Him leave. He entered already in communion with Him. God talked to Him. He was always going to remember the face that took him up from torment, the face that humanized his being, the eyes that looked at him as being worthy of communion.

This past Friday, our community received the visit of Metropolitan Gregory. He spent time both in Toronto and Scarborough, and he talked at length with different people. During these discussions he mentioned one thing about the broken communion we experience today. He said there was a time when having different opinions would not make us enemy to each other. Not so today, when having different opinions means being identified enemies. Identified with the purpose of becoming a target that can be taken out. Literally, eliminated. That's the spirit that makes us see each other today.

We see in the gospel this logic completely reversed. Christ is talking even with the evil spirits and He satisfied their plea, even though that leads to the destruction of the creatures that He created. And more than that, He approaches the human being that was demonized with the desire to enter into communion with him. With the one who was lowered by the evil spirits and ashamed of being human, reminding of his sinfulness by mocking his nakedness. With the one who was made a spectacle for the

entire community whom he terrorized and who gave up on him, seeing no hope, treating him the way evil spirits wanted to be treated.

“Mary, Mary ... Mother of God

Take all the sorrows of humankind

To make homes with them for the children of Gaza”.

On Thursday afternoon, R. came to visit us and said: “You know, I am drunk, but I am more sane than many people. Please pray for peace. Many people don’t want that today.” He is crying. “Pray so we don’t hurt each other more.”

He shares the little poem he wrote. He said the few lines first in Polish and after that he translated them in English. He is crying as he says the lines.

He is not the only one this week who prays for peace, Mary, who comes twice a week and serves people, became joyful as a child when she saw we had turkey for dinner on Wednesday. She brought five mushrooms so we can make stuffing for the turkey, so that people may have a real Thanksgiving dinner. On Thursday, she prayed suddenly for peace, so that all the people and children and women would not suffer. She said, “pray that the war stops.”

It is the cry of the poor who are in solidarity with those who suffer the most today. Wise people talk about stopping the war or make emotional declarations about peace while identifying the enemies. The poor cannot but cry and pray for the suffering of those who have no choice. They understand their innocent pain and feel it. They are not indifferent to it. They bring it up in prayer and have the faith that God listens to them. They have no doubt. They know His mercy, not like the evil spirits, that want things fixed for themselves with no intention for repentance. No, they appeal for His mercy because they are open over and over again to life. When evil spirits take position, the innocents are suffering the most. The poor told us today that they are not alone. They share in their pain, suffering, prayer and hope.

...” but the people would not receive him, ... And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them as Elijah did?”(Thursday gospel)

The rejection of Jesus is touching the apostles’ soul in a deep and unforgivable way. John, being younger, might have experienced that for the first time. Seeing the rejection of Christ was deeply painful for him. And he wanted revenge. Both apostles wanted it. And in a way it made sense. If a community does not receive God, why are they worthy of living? What good is coming out of that?

“Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant, save me in Thys mercy” (Ps 31:16)

If unity in Christ is the movement of the Holy Spirit, the rejection of communion with Christ and each other might touch the deepest sensitive image in us. As it is experienced, rejection would give all kind of reasons to refuse communion and to vindicate our wound by wounding others. The gospel today speaks against this “justified” hate. God always moves towards communion with us. He always initiates the dialogue and meets us up front. He crosses over to meet the demonized person today. He talks even with those who do not repent and do not want to enter into His presence. With those who reject a relationship with Him while asking for favours in return. But however deep and numerous these spirits are, Christ is reaching to the heart of man and shows His face. And His grace, once seen, is creating communion with the one who has been the image of ultimate rejection. Because Christ sees the

wounded image of Himself in the demonized person as in an icon. And He changes that in the image of His glory, when He is uplifted on the cross. It is precisely why the poor see the suffering in the innocents' souls overseas, even though all the spirits around us bring confusion and seduce us to look at false idols. They see and they relate with it. They pray and they remind us that the movement towards unity is eternal, and it torments only those who do not desire it in Christ.

With God, it is the knowledge without repentance that does not last and goes off the cliff sooner or later. But what endures is the communion with each other, even when we experience extreme alienation, mocking or even possession by the evil spirits. In other words, there is more hope today for a demon possessed land than for a land where people know God's will, but intentionally do not want to enter into His mercy.



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