



Daily Reflections

January 29, 2018

Scripture

Mark 5: 1-20

Jesus and his disciples came to the other side of the sea,
to the territory of the Gerasenes.

When he got out of the boat,
at once a man from the tombs who had an unclean spirit met him.
The man had been dwelling among the tombs,
and no one could restrain him any longer, even with a chain.
In fact, he had frequently been bound with shackles and chains,
but the chains had been pulled apart by him and the shackles smashed,
and no one was strong enough to subdue him.

Night and day among the tombs and on the hillsides
he was always crying out and bruising himself with stones.

Catching sight of Jesus from a distance,
he ran up and prostrated himself before him,
crying out in a loud voice,

"What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?

I adjure you by God, do not torment me!"

(He had been saying to him, "Unclean spirit, come out of the man!")

He asked him, "What is your name?"

He replied, "Legion is my name. There are many of us."

And he pleaded earnestly with him

not to drive them away from that territory.

Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside.

And they pleaded with him,

"Send us into the swine. Let us enter them."

And he let them, and the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine. The herd of about two thousand rushed down a steep bank into the sea, where they were drowned.

The swineherds ran away and reported the incident in the town and throughout the countryside.

And people came out to see what had happened.

As they approached Jesus, they caught sight of the man who had been possessed by Legion, sitting there clothed and in his right mind.

And they were seized with fear.

Those who witnessed the incident explained to them what had happened to the possessed man and to the swine.

Then they began to beg him to leave their district.

As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed pleaded to remain with him.

But Jesus would not permit him but told him instead,

"Go home to your family and announce to them all that the Lord in his pity has done for you."

Then the man went off and began to proclaim in the Decapolis what Jesus had done for him; and all were amazed.

Our Scripture Reflection

"Go home to your family...", Jesus tells the healed man and like so many others, He disregards Jesus' command and tells everyone the Good News. Why did Jesus specifically tell the man to go to His family? Because the toughest missionary territory most of us will ever encounter is within our own four walls. Oh, we are so quick to tell them about a job promotion, the results of a test or a new food we experienced. But Jesus? Why is it so difficult to talk about Jesus with those closest to us???

Food for your Journey

A Dutch missionary and Carmelite priest in Brazil, Carlos Mesters, distinguishes between two strategies for helping people: the stork and the midwife. The stork "presents the child to the parents - as if the child came from outside the parents, as if there is no need for gestation and painful birth. The midwife helps in the painful birthing of the child who has been gestating

in the mother's womb, and the experienced and skilled midwife knows when to intervene in the birth and when, in the best of circumstances, to stand back and let the birthing occur with little intervention." It is so simple to see that we must function as midwives, assisting people in bringing forth healing in their lives, "stirring up the gift of God" that is within them (2 Tim. 6: 1). It is no simple matter to function this way. It is much easier to be a stork.

--Defenseless Flower: A New Reading of the Bible

(Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989), 133.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, I love all the people You have placed in my life, especially my family. Lord, fill my heart with compassionate love for them so that because of my love, I will never miss an opportunity to witness to them about You. Amen