

Loving good, hating evil brings life and the prophet Amos says with these as my guide the Lord God of host will be with me as I claim. In other words, as we would say, he "walks the talk and does not just talk the walk." Justice must prevail and surge like water while goodness must flow like an unending stream. Until the people respond in this way the Lord spurns their feasts, does not accept their offerings or listen to their noisy songs. Their sinful ways create obstacles to being heard and God's pity is not with them.

The psalmist makes it clear that God the Lord has spoken and his words are not to be deaf to us. As a prophet the psalmist rebukes the people for they let God's words fall to the wayside¹ and try to cover it up with elaborate liturgical sacrifices when the Lord only seeks prayerful praise from honest and sincere hearts. A devouring fire precedes him and a raging storm is around him and this will accent the seriousness of the message

Jesus entered the pagan territory of Gadara and encounters two demon-possessed men, savage and violent, who attacked all who come by their way. Immediately they recognize Jesus as "Son of God" and express concern about their "suffering before the appointed time"; i.e., they understand that the victory of good over evil will eventually come at the end of time. Jesus speaks, not to the men, but to the demons² inside the men and three simple words, "Out with you!" eject the demons into the neighboring swine who immediately rush into the sea and drown. The townspeople come and plead with Jesus to leave, placing more importance on the swine resource than on the two human beings restored to dignity and now able to lead normal lives and the many who will now be safe from their attacks.



It is interesting to note that today's Gospel appropriately relates to today's announcement:

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Exorcists now have a legal weapon at their disposal.

The Vatican has formally recognized the International Association of Exorcists, a group of 250 priests in 30 countries who liberate the faithful from demons.

The Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano reported Tuesday that the Vatican's Congregation for Clergy had approved the organization's statutes and recognized the group under canon law.

<http://melkaplace.com>

¹ This reminds one of the *Parable of the Seed*, Matthew 14:3-9

² Demons are spiritual beings without bodies, always seeking bodies, preferably human, through which they can exert their evil influences.