



■ † Fifth Sunday of St. Matthew

The Unhealthy Fear of Relinquishing Our Complacency*



The **Gadarenes** saw the Lord's wondrous miracle when He cast out a legion of devils, and yet the whole city came out and besought the Lord "that He would depart out of their coasts" (St. Matthew 8:34).

We do not see them regarding the Lord with hostility, but neither do we see any faith in Him.

They were seized with a kind of indeterminate fear, which resulted in them asking Him to go wherever He wished, as long as He would not bother them.

This is a true image of people who live in peace with their possessions. An order of things has formed around them which is not unfavorable. They are accustomed to it; they never give any thought or feel the need to change or discontinue anything, and they are afraid to take a new step. They sense, however, that should a command come down from above, the fear of God and their conscience would force them to renounce the old and accept something new.

Thus, they strive to avoid any situation that might lead them to such convictions, so that they might continue to live quietly in their old habits, pleading ignorance.

These are the sort of people who are afraid to read the Gospel and Patristic books, or to discuss spiritual matters. They fear that if their conscience be thereby disturbed, it

might wake up and start forcing them to abandon what they had and accept something new.



(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God*