

**Please Leave** Fourth Week in Ordinary Time Monday, January 29, 2018 8:15 AM 2  
Sm 15:13-14, 30; 16:5-13; **Mk 5:1-20** (Some people have a sense of adventure and at least a glimmer of what is really possible for human life, but others do not.)

**“Then they began to beg him to leave their district.”**

We have to keep in mind the audience of this gospel—this is the Gospel of Mark—the **audience is Christian Jews**, Christians Jews, not gentiles, and this is written very early; it’s the first gospel finished at least by 70. In the early days of the Christian Church the Jews **continued to practice the dietary laws of the Torah. So from their point of view this area of the Gerasenes is an area that is unclean.** It is unclean because the Torah is not being practiced. The people are herding swine, which are unclean; and this man is full of unclean spirits.

**Now in one fell swoop Jesus cleans out the whole area.** The man is freed of his unclean spirits, and the hills are free of unclean animals. But what’s the response? **The response is: please leave!** It’s very important that we hear this because we could get the idea that the good news is so good that everyone wants it. Well, no. No, people wanted the healing power of Jesus when it was released. They came to him in droves. They followed him after the multiplication of loaves; they wanted to eat. **But they didn’t necessarily want to be cleansed.**

And so it is today. **The good news is quite frequently rejected by people because they don’t want what’s entailed, a new life in God, as opposed to my life.** I like my life. I want my life to be centered on me and I want to do what I want. Well in that case the good news is not good for me. And that’s the problem of the world. This is one of the problems that many reformers do not understand. There are all kinds of people with good ideas of ways to improve the Church, society, the government, the school system, whatever.

**The real problem is everything is the way it is because people are the way they are.** People are the way they are, **and that is why the world is the way it is.** That’s true of the Church, the government, the educational system, business, everything. **Jesus’ message is that we need a radical and profound change.** Some people welcome that teaching. Some people are willing to go along with something totally new. Some people are willing to let go of what doesn’t work. **Some people have a sense of adventure and at least a glimmer of what is really possible for human life, but others do not.** That’s the meaning of this gospel.