

(choir hymning) (orchestral music) (choir hymning) (orchestral music) (choir hymning)

- The majesty and glory and power of God reminds us that we have not always responded to the possibilities which are ours to live as loving responsible people. Let us now make our corporate confession. Oh Lord, holy and righteous God, we acknowledge before you that we do not love you above all things. We do not really love our neighbor. We are divided one from the other, by age, status, race, and sex. We've made false barriers of neighborhood, class, profession, and we lacked the conscious that should have caught me out Christian affirmation. We accuse ourselves before you, oh God. We adore you, whose nature and name is law, to forgive us and in forgiving to heal us so that our lives, our communities and our institutions will finally be changed. Amen. And now, oh God, we pray that you were here for us as we make our personal confession and the silence of this place. Amen. We know through Jesus, that God is loving and forgiving. And when we acknowledge who we are, God forgives us and frees us to move into the future as loving, caring people. And we give thanks for this. Amen.

- May I take this moment to say a word of welcome to those of you who are visiting as a part of parents' weekend at the university, this weekend. I hope that it has been a good weekend for you as you have been reunited at least momentarily with your son or daughter, or even in the cases of a few, with sons and/or daughters. We are glad to have you here on the campus. And we are particularly pleased to have you worship God with us in this place on this holy day. We worship here though, not only at 11 o'clock, but may I remind you since it is not noted in the bulletin today, that we worship again this evening at 6:30 in the chapel with an informal service of worship, we worship on Wednesday morning with communion service and the Memorial Chapel and on Thursday evening at 5:15 with our non-sexist liturgy, a worship service for all persons. You are invited to share in these experiences of worship of God with us. I call your attention though, and that's the main reason I am here at this moment, to a very special announcement, which is unprecedented in the life of this chapel, an announcement requesting your help and requesting more specifically your financial help. As those of you know, who worship here regularly, all of the chapel offerings received in every service of worship here, go to meet the needs of other persons. The university and its budget maintains the life and the work of this chapel, including the upkeep of the building, all materials and supplies for all that we do and all salaries, thus bringing us to say to those who worship here, every penny you give goes to serve others in the name and in the spirit of Christ. That's why we are making it not a part of the chapel offerings not a part of the university's budget, but we're making a very special appeal to help us buy new robes for chapel choir. The chapel choir is the largest student organization on campus with some 180 or more students and a total of over 200 persons, members of the choir. We have however, only 148 full choir robes, that means the black robe and the white collar. So you see some with black, some with white and some fortunately have a full set. We are all blessed Sunday by Sunday, by the magnificent music that this choir provides us as a part of their and our worship of God. Ben Smith and Bob Perkins, and the choir members give of themselves day by day to serve God and to serve us. We're asking that you either as an individual or as a family, or maybe two or three or a half dozen students of you might want to go together

and combine your resources to buy one robe. I have suggested this approach and we're using this approach because I'm convinced that there are at least 200 persons or 200 groups of persons or 200 families here who will help us outfit the robe, the choir with new robes. This is not much for one person or one family or one group of persons, it would be much from our chapel offerings. It would be much to ask of the university. So I invite you to share in this special project so that as the choir, one of these days comes precessing down the aisle that can all be robed alike. We can all rejoice and having had a part in that. You are requested to share in this special project, which for the first time is for us, but also is for the glory of God. (choir hymning)

- The Old Testament lesson is from the Prophet Daniel, chapter one verses one through eight. An oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum of Alqosh. The Lord is a jealous God and avenging. The Lord is avenging and raffle. The Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and of great might. And the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm. And the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry. He dries up all the rivers, Bashan and Carmel with her. The bloom of Lebanon fades. The mountains quake before him, the hills melt, the earth is laid waste before him, the world and all that dwell there in. Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger? His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken asunder by him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble. He knows those who take refuge in Him, but with an overflowing flood, He will make a full end of his adversaries and will pursue His enemies into darkness. Here ends the lesson. Will you stand please for the reading of the gospel? The gospel taken from St. Luke 8:26-39. Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. And as He stepped out on land, there met Him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time, he had worn no clothes and he lived not in a house, but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before Him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, son of the most high God? I beseech you, do not torment me." For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For many a time, it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert. Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion." For many demons had entered him. And they begged Him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now, a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside and they begged Him to let them enter these. So he gave them leave. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swines and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened. And they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And those who had seen it, told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, where they were seized with great fear. So He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away saying, "Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away proclaiming throughout the whole city, how much Jesus had done for him. The gospel of the Lord. (orchestral music) (choir hymning)

- Let us with surety and certainty, make our corporate affirmation of our fate. We are not alone. We live in God's world. We believe in God who has created and is creating, who has come, and the truly human Jesus,

to reconcile and make me, who works in us and others through the spirit. We trust God who calls us to be the church to celebrate life and its fullness, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist the evil, to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen, our judge and our hope, in life and death and life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. The Lord be with you.

- And you same.

- Let us pray. Oh, Holy God, you know who we are, hear us as we wait and pray and turn restlessly and search of you. We bow before you with joyful hearts, because life has been good to us, with heavy hearts because of personal pain, with fearful hearts because of a terror which is facing us, with waiting hearts, to hear a word we need at this time, we ask you to receive our thanks for all that brings us joy and love for the reunion with those we love, for the love and care which we receive from expected and from unexpected sources, for those who work, that we may live, those who heal us, teach us, who provide our clothing, shelter and food, and to those who clean up from our waste and disorder. And we pray, oh God, that we will receive from you comfort and support and vision, which will enable us to live without pain and anxiety and fears. We give you thanks oh God, for every community of love, where we have known our sins are forgiven, and for every ministry of grace where our offenses and the burden of an uneasy conscience, and also the frictions and resentments of life are resolved in forgiveness and mercy. And we pray, oh God, for those who have been overcome in the struggle of life, whether by the inhumanity of their neighbors' action or about their own limitation, I buy those hazards of lies which face all of us, that they may contend against injustice without a bitterness which is destroying, may overcome their own weakness with diligence and may live creatively and redemptively in the place where they found themselves. Hear our prayers, oh God, for those persons who give that energies to care for persons who are suffering and oppressed and exploited, who are in need of liberation, of food, of human love and caring. And we live to your loving care and comfort. Those persons who are serving and caring for their neighbor in need, discover pain and suffering. And we prayed that the vision of the suffering Christ may be redemptive to their pain. And now, oh God, we lift to you those persons we know who need your love and support. Hear us as we lift them in the silence of this time. We give you thanks that you do hear and respond to us when we come to you. And now may we pray the prayer of Our Lord. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thy is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, amen.

- Steven Vincent been a once wrote, "Life is not lost by dying, life is last minute by minute, day by dragging day and all the thousands small uncaring ways. Life is precious. Life is valuable. Life is irreplaceable. Life is meaning. Life is loving. Life is serving. Life is wanting, hoping, caring, giving. Life is, life is. No matter how you might want to complete that sentence, whatever words or symbols or expressions you choose to use, life is. All of these, this Gerasenes man filled with demons was missing. And so I ask of you and of myself this morning, how much of life, how much of real life are you and I missing? Our scripture lesson, which was so beautifully and meaningfully read for us this morning, from the gospel according to Luke, is a very strange passage describing a most bizarre experience in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was a man from the city, a man who was filled with demons who lived out in the country. He ran around with no clothes on. He

lived among the tombs of all places. This man came to Jesus. And when confronted with the Christ, he cried out, "What have you to do with me? Oh son of God of the most high? Do not torment me." Jesus commanded the unclean spirits to come out of this man. They entered into a herd of swine and of all things, a swine rushed down the cliff into the lake and were drowned all killed later. The man Luke tells us cleansed of his demons and in his right mind, sat at the feet of Jesus. Jesus was implored by the people to leave that part of the country. And the man wanted very much to go with Jesus. And Jesus said, "No, no return to your own home and declare how much God has done for you." A strange story. Filled with things expected, filled with things very real and filled with some things unexpected, day by dragging days has been. Life is lost in all the thousands small uncaring ways. This story of the Gerasene man filled with demons may not be fully biographical or autobiographical for any one of us, but there is a little bit or a whole lot. There is some I presume to say of you and me, and this story. So let's look at it. There's some things in this story that one would naturally expect in any story about the life of Jesus, wherever Jesus appears, people in need are there. Indeed, people in need or attracted to him just as surely and just as quickly as steel pans are attracted to a magnet. We know that there is some power magnetically attractive in this man from Galilee, and where He is, there are the blind, the lonely, the sick, the death, then from the lame and even the dead. So knowing that Jesus attracts those in need, one would have expected that a wild and demon-filled man would appear. And then one might naturally expect the response, which comes from the man, "What have you to do with me? Jesus, son of the most high God? do not torment me." Well, you see, when we are in need, when we cry to God, when we open ourselves and reveal some of our wild and weird nature, when the real person within us is laid bare before the presence of God, when some of the masks come off us, the very first cry that may utter from our lips may very well be, "What have you to do with me Oh God? Please, please do not torment me." Then we also expect Jesus, this word of God made flesh, this ever present love revealed to us, we expect this Jesus to care. Yes, we would be shocked if Jesus were not to care, wouldn't we? As we read the story, we anticipate eagerly that that if no one else around cares about this man, Jesus will and he does. He is concerned, He loves, He wants to help. He tries to understand. He reaches out. He stops to listen and to hear. And he pauses to look at the man. And Jesus does just, as we might expect, he asks for the man's name, but he wanted to know much more than the man's name. "What is your name?" He said, which in Hebrew means, "Tell me my friend, who you are. Tell me about your family, about your history. What is life like for you?" And the man said, "I am Legion," for he was filled with many demons, and Jesus knew immediately who he was and what his needs were. The expected also comes when Jesus caused the mad demons to come from the man and to enter in to this swine, why? We come to the heart of the gospel here my friends, because life teaches us that when someone is saved, a price has to be paid. When salvation comes, someone suffers, when someone is redeemed, someone bears the burden. When someone is made whole, another person hurts in the process. William Stringfellow points this out to us, the validity of this truth in his book, "A Private and a Public Faith." When he talks about the Broadway musical and very popular movie of just a few years ago and titled "West Side Story." Stringfellow writes West Side Story as a musical and a movie. It is also a good business venture. "It's commerce." He said. It is literature. It is an attempt to tell in contemporary idiom, the story of Romeo and Juliet. It is good music. It is sociology. West Side Story, He says is also theology. What happens? What is it that happens in West Side Story? There are two groups you will recall; one Puerto Rican, the other Italian, who are deeply estranged from each other. They are enemies, Stringfellow writes, they fight, a boy is killed and out of the death of one boy, the two groups then become reconciled to each other. Does that sound?" He says, "Does that sound really familiar

to you? It is familiar." He says, if you have ever heard and beheld the gospel in the church, one dies and many are reconciled. That is the word of God. The point is, that when someone is helped, someone else pays for it. Out of sacrifice, comes redemption, out of death comes life. When a baby is born, a mother has to bear the pains of that birth. When this man was healed from his demon, some herdsmen or herdsman lost their swine. When the love of God was supremely revealed in Jesus, he had to die. That is the word of God. That is the gospel. That is the expected in your life and in mine. Well then there's some things that are vividly real in this story, as real, as stained glass windows in this chapel, or as real as the sun shining outdoors right now, one real experience is seen in the crowd's reaction to this man. Listen, they found him sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind. And they were free. Strange isn't it? As long as he was mad, he was no bother. The crowd could tolerate him. They were not concerned, but when they came upon him in his right mind, they were afraid. His madness didn't worry them, his sanity, his hell, his fate, filled them with fear. So it is with some of us. We really don't know what to do with someone made whole in Christ. Why is it that we back off or our stand at arms length, or we become a little leery, or we feel a bit uneasy about someone who is sitting at the feet of Jesus in his or her own right mind. It was Dwight L. Moody, the evangelist of the turn of this century, who once said, "The world has yet to see what one person totally obedient to the will of God today can do." I have an idea that we would probably be afraid, but we want others to have just the right amount of the spirit of Christ in them. We want them to have enough to make them good. We want them to have enough to make them just right to suit our tastes, but not too much. Or if they have too much of the spirit of Christ in them, we become afraid. Another real experience in this story and in our lives, I think, it's seen in the man's reaction to Jesus. What was that? He wanted to be with Jesus. So it is with us. When someone comes to mean a great deal to us as Jesus did to this man, when someone has helped us, when someone has strengthened us or guided us, we want to be with that person, a doctor, a counselor, a coach, a nurse, a teacher, a neighbor of brand who helps us in a time, or in many times of desperate need is someone we then want to be with and to share life with. And this man you see had been changed and transformed so radically and so completely from madness to sanity, from sickness to health, from brokenness to wholeness, that he wanted to share life with the one who was responsible for that. So he asked Jesus to let him go with him, thinking that this would be the way that he could live in this loving presence forever. Luke tells us that the man even beg Jesus to let him go with him. And now after the expected and after the real, after they expected elements in the real elements in this story, we come to those that are unexpected. The word of Jesus, which is unexpected, at least to me is, "No, you cannot go with me." I care greatly for you, you care greatly for me. God's love is now very present in you. Your love for God is now very present in you. But no, no I don't. My friend want you to go with me, go home, return to your own home and declare how much God has done for you. And you went away proclaiming throughout all the land, the whole city, how much Jesus had done for him. Oh, goodness. Can that really be? Is this true that Jesus told this man, not to follow him, but to go back home? Are we hearing correctly when we hear Jesus say, "Go, go back home, return to where you came from?" There, tell how much is that correct. William James at the age of 26 is supposed to have said to a friend, much, would I give much, would I give for a constructive passion of some kind. This man had a passion, a constructive passion, a passion for the Lord, Jesus Christ. And he wanted to express it to act it out, to live on it. And he thought he could express it best by leaving his community and by going with Christ. "Not necessarily so." Jesus said. "This man had an awesome life-changing experience with the grace of God." Real rich, wholesome, healthy, vivid to him through Christ in those moments. And he thought that if he were to know and to feel fully the presence of

God, the grace of God continually in his life, that he would have to be beside Christ all the rest of his life. "Not necessarily so." Jesus said. Jesus said, "Go home. There, you can fulfill your passion to serve. There, just as much as with me, you can experience the grace of God." The blessed place then to work for Christ is right where you are, right where you and I are. You say, "But Bob, that's the hardest place." My friends, I couldn't agree with you more. And that may be precisely the reason that we're told to go back home, wherever home may be for you right now, the best but often the hardest place to serve Christ is where we live our everyday. Helen coupled the other chaplains and I in this university council with many students, not the least among this number are children of preachers. Why is it that preacher's children often complain most about their father not being available, about them showing little or no concern for them? As one of our students said to me about his preacher father, "My dad always had time for everyone, everyone, but us children." Why is it that many students here often cry out my roommate? "My roommate has time on others down the hall and across the campus, but never any time or any concern for me? She can be kind to everybody else on campus, but I catch it." Why is it the doctors' families often need more healing than any others in the neighborhood? The doctor, mother, or father, gives endless hours to care for others to heal someone else, but how about those at home? Why is it that we can often talk to a total stranger about God or Christ or being Christian, but we freeze up, or we can't find the right time or the right words to talk with our friends or our family. It's hard, very, very difficult to share with those back home how much God has done for me, very hard. This points out, I think some of our real need today, right now in this country, and that need is that for those of us who claim the name of Christ to be living on proclaiming the love of God, right at home, right where we are every day, if this were so, if this were so, and if this were being done, perhaps Richard Pryor would not get away with degrading and dehumanizing and demeaning, not only himself, but his people, Patty Hearst would not make a mockery of herself and of her family and her friends, or perhaps Squeaky Fromme or Sarah Jane Moore would not have to take shots at the president of the United States in order to gain some publicity and some affirmation, perverse as it may be. I'll bet you that someone or that many someones missed many opportunities to tell these persons about the love of God and what God had done for them and could also do for each of them. Why is it that this is hard, hard to understand? Why is it that this word, "to return home" is surprising and unexpected? Perhaps it is because we like the preacher or the roommate or the doctor, think that we have to go somewhere that we have to leave and follow. We think that service to Christ is out there somewhere when really Jesus says simply, but with direct bluntness, "Return home." Now we get some idea about why Jesus told this man. And does he say it to us, "Return to your home and declare how much God has done for you?" Return home. That's precisely the best place to experience the grace of God. Return home. That's precisely the best place to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. My friends this morning, when you receive the grace of God, will you express the love of Christ to others? Will you return home, wherever home may be, and tell others how much God has done for you? Amen. Amen. (orchestral music) (choir hymning) (orchestral music) (choir hymning) (orchestral music) (choir hymning) (orchestral music) (choir hymning) (orchestral music) (choir hymning)

- Accept this offering of ourselves before you for the service of all people. And we pray that all our living will be for the glory and affirmation of your creation and the spirit of your son, Jesus, the Christ. Amen. (orchestral music) (choir hymning) Go to the place where God has given you responsibility and may the blessing of God, our creator, redeemer, and sustainer, go with you and support you now and forever more.

(choir hymning) (bell chiming) (orchestral music)