

The Confessor's Tongue for June 21, 2009

All Saints of North America & Russia; Martyr Julian of Tarsus

In honor of St. Maximus the Confessor, whose tongue and right hand were cut off in an attempt by compromising authorities to silence his uncompromising confession of Christ's full humanity & divinity.

Sunday of All Saints of North America

This second Sunday after Pentecost, we remember all the Saints who have blossomed in our land just as the Russian Church remembers all the Saints of the Russian land on this day.

We remember St. Herman, the monk who came as one of the original missionaries in 1794 and lived their until his repose in 1837. We remember St. Innocent, who first came as a married priest to Alaska in 1824, was made the first bishop of the area in 1840 after the death of his wife, and served their as a tireless missionary and translator of the Scriptures and services of the Church into the native tongues until he was called back to Moscow in 1868 to become Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia.

We remember the first martyrs of our land, St. Peter the Aleut, and Aleut lad who was tortured to death for his faith by Jesuits wanting him to convert in San Francisco in 1815, and St. Juvenaly, a Russian priest-monk and missionary who was martyred by natives near Lake Illiamna in Alaska in 1796.

We remember St. Tikhon, who served as bishop in America from 1898 to 1907 and was instrumental in seeing the services of the Church translated into English to make her worship and faith accessible to the English speakers of America, and who as Patriarch of Moscow from 1917 until his death in 1925, stood firm against the atheist Bolsheviks who sought to destroy the Church.

We remember St. Jacob Netsvetov of Alaska, the first native priest to be ordained to serve the Alaskan peoples, who labored as a missionary priest from 1828 until his repose in 1864.

We remember St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, an Eastern-rite Roman Catholic Priest (Uniate), who returned to the Orthodox Church in 1891 bringing 361 others with him, and who from then until his repose in 1909 labored tirelessly to reconcile Uniate Catholics with the Orthodox Church, himself personally bringing in about 15,000.

We remember St. Raphael, the first Arab speaking bishop to labor in North America as an auxiliary to St. Tikhon in 1904, and, who established more than 30 Syrian and Lebanese parishes, and who founded *The Word* journal in Arabic (which continues to be published to this day, in English now) before his repose in 1915.

We remember two priests, Alexander Hotovitsky and John Kochurov who labored in America for a time and who both were martyred back in Russia by the Bolsheviks, St. John being the first of many priest-martyrs under communism in 1918; St. Alexander died in the Solovki labor camp in 1930.

Finally, we remember two beloved hierarchs, St. Nikolai of Zicha and St. John of San Francisco. St. Nikolai was a Serbian bishop, known as a second Chrystosm for his powerful preaching and inspired

writings. After suffering during the Second World War at the hands of the Nazis in the Dachau death camp, he came to America and taught at St. Tikhon's seminary until his repose in 1956. St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco was a Russian bishop who escaped the Bolsheviks, for a time was in Serbia, and who later served the Russian emigre community in Shanghai, China with special care for orphans until Mao's communists drove them out; he brought his orphans to the United States and ended his life as Bishop in California. He is much beloved and is known as a wonderworker.

These are but the Saints known to us. Doubtless there are others who are known to God. O all ye Saints of North America, pray to Christ God for us!

The Ranks of the Saints

The Orthodox Church honors various men and women pleasing to God who appropriated various names, corresponding to their various ascetic acts of virtuous life on earth. Such names are: patriarchs, forefathers, prophets, apostles, hierarchs, holy equal to the Apostles, Hieromartyrs, Great Martyrs, Venerable martyrs, martyrs, confessors, Venerable ones, Righteous ones, Unmercenaries, and Blessed ones.

Patriarchs are the Old Testament Saints who followed God before the Law was given to Moses.

Forefathers are all the righteous ones who lived under the Law from Moses to John the Baptist.

Fathers are the Old Testament Saints from whose family our Lord Jesus Christ is descended.

Prophets are great according to the pious life of the men of the Old Testament who were selected by God Himself and were sent by Him to various places for predicting the future to the people, with regard to the coming of Christ, the Savior of the world, to earth.

Apostles are the great men of the New Testament, the people closest to Christ the Savior, His worthiest disciples and companions, who were sent by Him to various countries for the preaching of the Divine Gospel to the people.

Hierarchs and *Fathers* ("our Fathers among the saints) are the Eastern Patriarchs, the pious Popes of Rome, the Patriarchs, Archbishops, heirs to the Holy Apostles in the Christian Church and their great co-workers in preaching the Gospel and in their labor of true piety.

Holy Equal to the Apostles and *Enlighteners* are the men and women of royal or princely origin, but sometimes also of simple calling, who by their own preaching turned entire countries and peoples to Christ.

Hieromartyrs are Christian bishops and presbyters who died from torture for their belief in Christ.

Great martyrs are the pious men and women of various worldly ranks and positions, who courage-

ously and with great patience thoroughly underwent various persecutions, tortures, and torments by their torturers for their holy Christian faith.

Venerable Martyrs are the pious and true ascetic men and women, included in the monastic calling, who suffered from the pagans and heterodox believers for their faith in Christ.

Martyrs are those men and women of various callings and positions, who without confusion, but sometimes even with joy, went one by one or in groups into the presence of their torturers, and there were tortured to death for their firm and unshakable confession of their faith in Christ.

Confessors and Passion-bearers are those great men of virtuous life of the Christian Church, courageously and fearlessly everywhere and always confessed their deep faith in Christ, who openly recognized themselves as true Christians, who endured torments and torture for this, but did not receive a martyr's death; some of them are called *branded*, because during torture special brands were put on the person.

Venerable Ones are the great, pious and Christ-loving men and women, desert-dwellers, hermits (who separated themselves from the world to the desert and there saved themselves in solitude), recluses (who voluntary enclosed themselves in separate caves and cells for their entire life) and pillar-dwellers (who practiced asceticism under the open sky on pillars, or high towers), silent ones (who voluntarily took up the asceticism of silence), and are all inclusive in the monastic calling.

Righteous Ones are the great men and women, who were glorified for their virtuous and pious life, zealous for the fulfillment of the commandments of God and for their unbowed observance of the truths of the Gospel teaching, not shirking their family or public obligations and living in the world.

Unmercenaries are men well pleasing to God who through their unmercenary (not taking payment) labor for the benefit of their neighbors served the suffering and healed the sick.

Blessed Ones are the men and women of various callings and positions, who in carrying out their mortal life, both in the world and in the desert, with unusual reserve, with extreme deprivation and denial of every possible worldly good, but sometimes even with many varieties of foolishness, all this "for the sake of Christ". They are often called 'fools for Christ' or 'holy fools'.

From S. V. Bulgakov, *Handbook for Church Servers*, 2 ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0586-0589. Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © all rights reserved.

Notes on First John Fr. Justin Frederick

The Apostle John writes as an eyewitness of the God-man Jesus Christ to bear witness to us about his firsthand experience that we might know the truth for ourselves. The result of hearing and believing the his message greatly benefits us.

First, John writes that our "joy may be full" (1:4). Joy is a defining characteristic of life in Christ, and

John writes that we may have it. Our world is full of pleasures and people vainly live to find 'happiness' therein, but true, abiding Christian joy is a different, greater matter.

John also writes so that we, by reading and doing, will be able to avoid sinning. "My little children, these things write I unto that ye sin not" (2:1). Sin is darkness, and, as John declares, in God "there is no darkness at all." We cannot walk in darkness, or habitually practice sin, and expect to have fellowship with the One who is light.

As John concludes his epistle, he says, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (5:13). One clear purpose throughout the book is that we should believe in Christ, put our trust in Him, and live our lives according to His commandments. He aims to supply on the basis of his testimony both in this epistle and in His Gospel sound reasons for believing and continuing in belief.

Moreover, his epistle provides us with a diagnostic for our lives that we may discern whether we are living up to our claims to be Christians. "That ye may know that ye have eternal life" refers to the reward Christ imparts to His followers, life which can only come from Him. If we pass the diagnostic, we may have a sound expectation of enjoying that life. Having eternal life also points to the fact that the power of Christ's Resurrection imparts eternal existence to the whole human race. Everyone will live eternally whether they wish to or not. The only question is whether that life will be the full life in Christ or the living death in the lake of fire.

If we know that we have eternal life based on Christ's Resurrection and that death in this world is not final, that knowledge will free us from the world's deadly philosophy "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die," *carpe diem*. To the degree that we do not apprehend the reality of eternity, to that degree we are vulnerable to succumbing to the temptation to seize passing pleasures today that cut us off from God's eternal love.

First John is a rich store of treasure for our souls. We shall continue to study it this week and in August. Please take advantage of this class!

Upcoming Events 2009

- 29 June – 3 July, Summer Camp ages 8-18 at Camp Grady Spruce
- 19 July Sunday: Dinner with Metropolitan Jonah for the Nativity of Our Lord Monastery, 7:00 p.m. at Bent Tree Country Club, \$40 a person, \$75 a couple. R.S.V.P. (469) 556-6179; info@monasteryfriends.com
- 16-19 August, men's retreat at Holy Archangels Monastery.
- 7 September, Labor Day Picnic

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!