

The Confessor's Tongue for July 29, A. D. 2012

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost: Martyr Callinicus

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.

July 29: Martyr Callinicus

Born in Cilicia and brought up in Christian piety, he left all and began to preach the Gospel. He was arrested in Ancyra by the pagan governor Sacerdos. When the governor, in fury, threatened him with torture if he would not worship idols, St. Callinicus replied: 'Every torture for my God is as welcome to me as bread is to a hungry man.' After harsh torture and beating, the governor shod him with iron shoes, with the nails sticking inwards, and ordered that he be driven out to the town of Gangra, for he did not dare to have him further tortured or killed in Ancyra, as many men, beholding the heroic endurance of the man of God, were turning to the Christian faith. On the way, the soldiers became thirsty and there was no water. St. Callinicus prayed to God and brought forth water from a rock. When they arrived in Gangra, the torturers threw Callinicus into a fiery furnace. The saint prayed to God, saying: 'I thank Thee, O heavenly Father, that Thou makest me worthy in this hour to die for Thy holy Name!; He then went into the fire. When the fire was extinguished, his dead body was found whole and untouched by the flames. He suffered with honor, and was crowned with a wreath of eternal glory, in about 250.

From the Prologue

St. Nicholas of Zicha

From Prayers by the Lake

Are there days gone by, O man, to which you would wish to return? They all attracted you like silk, and now remain behind you like a cobweb. Like honey they greeted you, like stench you bade them farewell. All were totally filled with illusion and sin.

See how all the pools of water in the moonlight resemble mirrors; and how all the days that were lit up with you levity resemble mirrors. But as you stepped from one day to the next, the false mirrors cracked like thin ice, and you waded through the water and mud.

Can a day that has a morning and an evening as doorways be a day?

O luminous Lord, my soul is burdened with illusions and longs for one day—for the day without doorways, the day from which my soul has departed and sunk into the shifting shadows—for Your day, which I used to call my day, when I was one with You.

Is there any happiness gone by, O man, to which you would wish to return? Of two morsels of the same sweetness, the second is the more trite. You would turn your head away in boredom from yesterday's happiness, if it were set out on today's table.

Moments of happiness are given to you only in order to leave you longing for true happiness in the bosom of the ever-happy Lord; and ages of

unhappiness are given to you, to waken you out of the drowsy dream of illusions.

O Lord, Lord, my only happiness, will You provide shelter for Your injured pilgrim?

O Lord, my ageless youth, my eyes shall bathe in You and shine more radiantly than the sun.

You carefully collect the tears of the righteous, and with them You rejuvenate worlds.

What Is Secularism?

At our Diocesan Assembly in 2004, the Archbishop Dmitri of blessed memory spoke about our task of proclaiming Jesus Christ in an evil time based on the Gospel reading of the day: "For this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Indeed, the Church has always labored in evil times, but now in our so-called "Post-Christian era", our task is even more difficult. Secularism is rampant. His Eminence defined "secularism" in a most perceptive way: "the treating of this world as an end in itself." To counteract it, we must deepen our faith and our bond of love with one another.

What does it mean to treat the world as an end in itself? It means essentially that we allow our goals, our vision, our aspirations to be limited to this life. We may believe in God and go to church, but the focus of our life is getting education, getting a good job, buying a house, getting better cars, enjoying good food, having fun, having pleasure in relationships, seeing the next movie, getting the next video game, storing up funds for retirement, etc. Our thinking about things is defined by the conventional wisdom we acquire in school and in the media (if it can truly be called wisdom at all.)

"Treating the world as an end in itself" is what we do when we live to eat rather than eating to live. We can make a god of food and the pleasure we derive from eating, and many do. "Treating the world as an end in itself" is what we do when we center our lives around pleasure, whether it be sex, entertainment, food, power to control others, or the acquisition of stuff. St. Paul describes this as "worshipping the creature rather than the Creator."

If God is a part of this secular world view, it is merely as an addition to somehow make it better. Being a Christian is an ingredient that will enable our marriages to be better, our children to turn out better, a good luck charm, or a way of securing God's blessing on our lives (or at least avoiding a curse or judgment).

In contrast with a secular outlook that treats the world as an end in itself, the Orthodox Christian clearly sees Christ and His Kingdom as his true end, and this world and all it contains at best as a means to that end and at worst a deadly obstacle.

To overcome our attachment to the world as an end, Christ commands us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; He promises that if we do this, He will give us all the things we need to sustain our lives in this world that most people spend their whole lives and energy pursuing.

To overcome secularism, we are called to live in the Church, to live pious 'churchly' lives; the Russians use the term *tserkovny* to describe this, but the English 'churchly' doesn't quite have the same positive connotation. This means that we let the Church, where we participate in the Kingdom of God already, be the center of our lives. We live from Pascha to Pascha, from Sunday to Sunday; we always consider the Church calendar when planning other activities. We delight to come to the house of the Lord to present ourselves before Him and sing His praises.

To overcome secularism, we are called to fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. Fasting teaches us that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. It frees us from making a god of our stomach and from living to eat. It restores to us a proper relationship with food which man misused when he fell. It helps provides the means by which all of us may give alms.

Almsgiving helps fulfill the command of Christ to love one another as He has loved us. Love requires practical action to meet the needs of those God puts in our lives. Love will not allow a brother to go hungry, or thirsty, or unsheltered or unclothed. The practice of almsgiving effectively limits our over-consumption that so often leads to enslaving debt. Recognizing our obligation to our brother, we will choose not to live extravagantly or carelessly.

Fasting and Almsgiving work to make our prayer more effective. Prayer to the living God in the name of Jesus Christ is an action by which we demonstrate daily that we do not believe that this world is our end. By it we look beyond the creation to the Creator who made us for Himself. Our effective prayer unites us with God, our true end.

If we are to be Christians, if we are to be true disciples of Christ, we cannot allow ourselves to treat this world as an end in itself, even if everyone else around us seems to be doing so. May we use the Dormition Fast effectively to uproot the secularism in ourselves and gives ourselves more fully to Christ our true God.

Fr. Justin

From St. Maximus

Fear is twofold; one kind is pure, the other impure. That which is pre-eminently fear of punishment on account of offences committed is impure, for it is sin which gives rise to it. It will not last for ever, for when the sin is obliterated through repentance it too will disappear. Pure fear, on the other hand, is always present even apart from remorse for offences committed. Such fear will never cease to exist, because it is somehow rooted

essentially by God in creation and makes clear to everyone His awe-inspiring nature, which transcends all kingship and power. *First Century of Various texts, 69*

Dormition Fast from the Typicon

For those interested, the following text from the Typicon gives the full strictness of the Dormition Fast and provides us with something to aspire to. The Dormition Fast is the second strictest fast after Great Lent.

Concerning the Fast of the Most Holy Theotokos it should be known:

In the fast of the Dormition of Our Holy Lady Theotokos, 14 days except the Transfiguration of Christ, we fast until the ninth hour in the day [3 p.m. Monday-Friday]:

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, we eat dry [see note following].

On Tuesday and Thursday, cooked food without oil.

On Saturday and Sunday, cooked food with oil, and we drink wine: we don't eat fish, until the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos: but only on the Transfiguration of Christ, we eat fish, twice a day.

"Dry Easting" means that we eat only vegetables cooked with water and salt, and also such things as fruit, nuts, bread, and honey. In practice, octopus and shellfish are also allowed on days of xerophagy; likewise vegetable margarine and corn or other vegetable oil not made from olives.

Prayer of St. Thalassios

Christ, Master of all, free us from all these destructive passions and the thoughts born of them. For Thy sake we came into being, so that we might delight in the paradise which Thou hast planted and in which Thou hast placed us. We brought our present disgrace upon ourselves, preferring destruction to the delights of blessedness. We have paid for this, for we have exchanged eternal life for death. O Master, as once Thou hast looked on us, look on us now; as Thou becamest man, save all of us. For Thou camest to save us who were lost. Do not exclude us from the company of those who are being saved. Raise up our souls and save our bodies, cleansing us from all impurity. Break the fetters of the passions that constrain us, as once Thou hast broken the ranks of the impure demons. Free us from their tyranny, so that we may worship Thee alone, the eternal light. Having risen from the dead and dancing with the angels in the blessed, eternal and indissoluble dance. Amen. *From 400 Chapters on Love, Self-control, and Life in Accordance with the Intellect, 3.91-100, Philokalia, volume 2.*

Upcoming Events 2012

1-14 August: Dormition Fast
6 August: Holy Transfiguration
3 September: Labor Day Picnic
30 September: St. Maximus Annual Meeting

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!