

The Confessor's Tongue for November 4, A. D. 2012

22nd Sunday after Pentecost: The Holy Unmercenary Healers

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.

First Sunday in November

On the first Sunday in November, the Church gives us the option of celebrating the usual saints of the day (today St. Joannicius the Great and St. Mercurius) or using a special service to celebrate all of the Church's saints who fall in the category of "Unmercenary Healers". These are those who had medical training, which they used to heal the bodies and souls of those who were ailing, but even more, they relied upon the power of God for healing. They are called "unmercenary" because they did not charge for their services, but as they had freely received grace from God, they freely gave in return. They include the Holy Evangelist Luke, three sets of brothers by the names of Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus, John, the Great Martyr Panteleimon, Hermolaus, Diomedes, Sampson, Mocius, Anicetus, Artemius, Thelalaeus, Tryphon, Antipas, Haralmbus, and Blaise. Holy Unmercenary Physicians, pray to God for us!

If you want to grab God's attention so He'll hear you during prayer, turn the dial to humility, for God always works in this frequency; then humbly ask for His mercy. *Elder Paisios of Greece*

The Holy Myrrhbearers Society at St. Maximus

The purpose of the Myrrhbearers Society is to provide a service to our church and our community, that God may be glorified. Based upon the book *A Christian Ending*, by J. Mark & Elizabeth J. Barna, we propose to offer practical service and spiritual support to the family who has recently lost a loved one. We also invite other members of the community to serve in love at this difficult time.

One of the Aids to Penitence is to bury the dead. Others include comforting the mourning, and praying for the living and the dead. These are also known as corporal and spiritual acts of mercy, and are part of almsgiving, which along with prayer and fasting, strengthen us in our Christian life.

When a loved one passes away at home, for instance, the first thing one may do is pray for the recently departed:

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend the soul of thy servant _____ and beseech Thee to grant them rest in the place of Thy rest, where all the saints repose, and where the light of Thy countenance shineth forever. And I beseech Thee also to grant that our present lives may be godly, sober, and blameless, that, we too may be made worthy to enter into Thy heavenly Kingdom with those we love but see no longer: for Thou art the Resurrection and the Life, and the Repose of Thy departed servants, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The next thing you may want to do is to contact Father Justin, to notify him of what has happened and then contact your doctor to complete the action required by the State, including signing a death certificate.

Father Justin will contact the Myrrhbearers' Society, which will prepare the body for Christian burial as soon as possible, referencing the form you have filled out in advance, regarding certain details of action.

Following the guidelines in *A Christian Burial*, this could include the washing, and dressing of the body, the transportation to the church, having the church and coffin "dressed" for the funeral service, and so forth. An email will be sent to the parish to notify them that your loved one has passed away, when the church will be open for prayer and farewells, including what is the time of the funeral, and where the body will be buried. We will take care of the details necessary to complete this smoothly, and with the least stress to you and your family.

What can anyone in our community do now to participate in this endeavor?

Pray God will show you what is best done to be obedient to His will in these matters. Fill out the forms of the Society (all information is kept confidential and secure) which you discuss with your family, so they know what you are expecting.

- Would you be willing to receive a sudden call to pray for the departed and their family, to pray the appropriate prayers for that departed soul during the first twenty-four hours? Perhaps that could be done as a family.
- Would you be able to build or help build a coffin? Would you be willing to take instruction on this from someone with experience in making coffins?
- Would you be able to sew a white burial robe to have on hand at the church for such a time as this?
- Would you be able to obtain flowers and set them up at church for the funeral?
- Would you be able to provide an appropriate vehicle to transport the body from the home of the deceased to the church, and then to the burial site? Or perhaps just one of these two trips?
- Would you be able to obtain appropriate cards in advance that could be printed with a previously prepared message, to have at the church for those visiting the body, and attending the funeral?
- Would you be able to organize a mercy meal to follow the funeral? Perhaps have a few likeminded friends that would be ready at short

notice, deciding in advance what would be best served, depending on the season, etc.

- Could you make a donation to fund any part of the above, or other needs of the Society, such as replacing items used in this service?

There are MANY things you, as a member of this parish, could do to show your love and to glorify God in this crucial time.

Mark and Elizabeth Barna, authors of the book, *A Christian Ending*, guided our community during the passing of Vladyka Dimitri, in 2011. The coffin was made by Father Michael Storozuk, of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Denison, Texas. The shroud and the flowers were provided, and the body transported to the cemetery by the church family. The community came together and that passing of our beloved Archbishop was experienced with respect and love.

More recently, the society was able to carry out its ministry for Nina Johnston and her family when Nina died recently. Though this was our society's first immediate experience of caring for a body and did not feel ready, every one responded well and carried off the ministry admirably.

If this is inspiring to you, if this helps you to see the hope that is shared in expressing our Christian faith through how we bury our dead, please seriously consider your action regarding your own plans.

There will soon be a resource file in the church library area which may provide answers to many of your questions. The go-to people for your phone calls are Lois Lyda, Andrea Rovny, and Father Justin, but you may ask any Society member, of course.

If you are interested in becoming a Society member, Father Justin will be delighted to speak with you about this. Don't forget to get a copy of the book, *A Christian Ending*, for a first look at what is involved. There are MANY ways you can serve, and every effort can make a big difference in accomplishing this work of mercy. May God be glorified in all of this.

Society Members: Lois Lyda, Andrea Rovny, Louise Newcomb, Mary Moses, Isabel Stone, Olivia Reynolds, Sasha Moziulova, Benjamin Rovny.

RECOMMENDED READING:

A Christian Ending by J. Mark and Elizabeth Barna
O Death, Where is Thy Sting by Alexander Schmemmann
Life After Death by Hierotheos, Metropolitan of

Nafpaktos

Christ the Conqueror of Hell by Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev

The Path to Salvation by Saint Theophan the Recluse
The Orthodox Veneration of Mary, the Birthgiver of God by St. John of San Francisco

Mary: the Untrodden Portal, by George S. Gabriel
The Incarnation of Christ by Saint Athanasius
Conciliar Press booklets *Dealing with Grief* by Gordon T. Walker,

and *Prayer and the Departed Saints* by David C. Ford PhD

November Namedays

8 Michelle Frederick, Michael Rodgers, Michael Rehm (Archangel Michael)
24 Katherine Frederick, Ekaterina Chernaya, Katherine Colias (Great Martyr Katherine)
27 Emmanuel Lyda (St. James the Persian)

November Birthdays

2 Joseph Birthisel, 4 Michelle Frederick, 9 Geoff Stevenson, 11 Derek Sancer, 14 Anastasia Sancer, 14 Mindy Brown, 22 Mariah Northam, 23 Raina Joines, 24 Wendy Jackson, David Hernandez, 25 Fr. Justin Frederick, 30 Nina Sylantyeva

On the Icon of the Theotokos & Prayer

Elder Cleopa of Romanina (+1998)

When you see the icon of the Mother of God with the Christ Child in her arms, do you know what you are seeing? Heaven and earth! Heaven is Christ, He who is higher than the heavens, the Maker of heaven and earth. And the Mother of God represents the earth, because she is of our descent. She is from the royal and priestly lineage.

Prayer is the nourishment and life of the soul. Just as the body dies without food and drink, so also the soul dies without prayer.

On Living in the Present

From The Diary of a Russian Priest

Our continual mistake is that we do not concentrate upon the present day, the actual hour, of our life; we live in the past or in the future; we are continually expecting the coming of some special moment when our life will unfold itself in its full significance. And we do not notice that life is flowing like water through our fingers, sifting like precious grain from a loosely-fastened bag.

Constantly, each day, each hour, God is sending us people, circumstances, tasks, which should mark the beginning of our renewal; yet we pay them no attention, and thus we continually resist God's will for us. Indeed, how can God help us? Only by sending us in our daily life certain people, and certain coincidences of circumstance. If we accepted every hour of our life as the hour of God's will for us, as the decisive, most important, unique hour of our life—what sources of joy, love, strength, as yet hidden from us, would spring from the depths of our soul!

Let us then be serious in our attitude towards each person we meet in our life, towards every opportunity for performing a good deed; be sure that you will then fulfill God's will for you in these very circumstances, on that very day, in that very hour.

Upcoming Events 2012

13 November: All-American Council in Parma, Ohio, to elect a new Metropolitan.

15 November: Nativity Fast Begins

21 November: Entrance of Theotokos into the Temple (one of the Twelve Great Feasts)

21 January 2013: Feast of St. Maximus and the First Annual St. Maximus Memorial Lecture with John Granger.

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!