

The Confessor's Tongue for July 27, A. D. 2014

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost; Greater Martyr and Healer Panteleimon

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.

27 July St. Panteleimon

Holy Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon He served as a doctor at the imperial court in Nicomedia and was confirmed in the Christian faith by the Holy Presbyter Hermolaus (see July 26). Having heeded the confirmations of the "wise Hermolaus", he received from God the gift to heal illnesses for those who call on the name of Christ. Calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he healed the most difficult illnesses while completely disinterested and only demanded that the healed believe in Christ. After being denounced by doctors envying his glory, and accused of being a Christian before the Emperor Maximian, he was called in for interrogation and after he courageously confessed that he was a follower of Christ, he was turned over to severe torture. He was torn with a sharp iron and then his wounds were burned by fire, he was thrown into the vat with boiling tin and then fed to wild beasts, he was broken upon the wheel and finally they wanted to throw him into the sea. But the martyr remained unharmed everywhere. Then the Emperor ordered to behead him by the sword and to burn his body in the year 305. But even after his death the body of the great martyr remained unharmed by the fire. Now a part of the relics of St. Panteleimon are in the Mt. Athos St. Panteleimon Monastery and another part in the Moscow St. Panteleimon Chapel. The name "Panteleimon" in Greek means "all-merciful"

27 July Seven Enlighteners of the Slavs

They all were born Slavs. SS Cyril and Methodius are well known. Sts. Clement and Gorasdu were bishops (the latter in Moravia after St. Methodius) but Sts. Angelarius, Nahum and Sabbas were presbyters. They did much work in spreading and establishing the faith of Christ among the Slavs. The relics of St. Clement rest in Ochrid in the church of his name. The relics of Sts. Gorasdu and Angelarius repose in Albanian Belgrade. The relics of St. Nahum are in the Monastery of his name near Lake Ochrid.

Clergy Guidelines of the OCA, cont.

The Confessor's Tongue *will contain sections from the "Guidelines for Clergy" of the OCA over the summer. One might ask, if they are for the clergy, why print them for the laity? We do so because there is mutual accountability in the Church. The laity should be aware of the duties of the clergy, as well as of their own duties. The disciplines provided in the guidelines are those of the Church, not merely the opinion of any particular bishop or priest. By reading, knowing, and conforming to these guidelines, both the clergy and laity prove to be faithful and honorable members of the Body of Christ. Please read these carefully, and if you have questions or desire clarification on any point, please ask your parish priest.*

II. Some Considerations on Authority, Responsibility, and Accountability in the Church

A. The Episcopacy

1. The hierarch determines the assignment of clergy in his own diocese.
2. The hierarch's official representative in a parish of his diocese is the assigned priest or rector.
3. The hierarch has direct supervision over all matters in his diocese involving canon law and the spiritual function, rights, and duties of the clergy.
4. The hierarch alone may judge the merits of the transfer of clergy from one assignment in his diocese to another. A clergyman who would like to transfer from the parish to which he has been assigned must submit a written petition to his hierarch.
5. The hierarch alone has the right to invite another hierarch to serve in one of his own parishes. Should a parish wish to have the presence of another hierarch for a particular occasion, that request must be made in writing to its own hierarch.

B. Priests & Deacons

1. Ministry is identified by Our Lord in terms of being sent to serve. He gives Himself as an example and model for the service to be performed: "I am among you as the one who serves". Greatness in ministry is proportionate to greatness in service as we see when the Lord washes the feet of His disciples. Thus the ministry is not to be mistakenly identified with holding a particular ecclesiastical office, but with having been sent to serve the Church, the Body of Christ, in a specific community.
2. The priest is the spiritual father of his parish, and every parishioner ought to respect him as such. The priest is addressed with the title of Father. This can remind him that he is to treat his parishioners, his parochial family, as a father treats his children, i.e., with love, kindness, patience, and understanding. Being edified by his example, the parishioners will respect him as their spiritual father and as their true guide along the path of salvation.
3. The priest must be diligent in preparing homilies for his flock, giving this priority over administrative duties. The homily at the Divine Liturgy should take place immediately after the reading of the Holy Gospel.
4. The priest must see to it that the appropriate hymns and responses are sung during the Divine Services in accordance with the Orthodox Tradition and by persons trained for the exercise of this ministry. The choir director or cantor and the parishioners that make up the choir are directly responsible to the priest, who is the presiding authority in all worship services.
5. Often, it is not possible for the parish choir to participate in all liturgical services. The priest should encourage congregational singing under the leadership of a qualified cantor or musician.

6. It is a primary responsibility of the parish priest to continue ongoing education of the faithful in matters of dogma, tradition, precepts, and sacred rites of the Church. He supervises the Church School, gives direction to its instructors, and decides on appropriate resources and texts in conformity to diocesan directives.

7. The priest must include in his ministry personal contact with all parishioners. This shall include a visit to the homes of parishioners during the days of the celebration of the Feast of Theophany, a traditional occasion for this. He can bless their homes and also discuss spiritual matters with them. If the number of homes to be visited is too great, or if winter weather makes it impractical, these visits may be done at another appropriate time of year.

8. Because the priest is the spiritual father, he must not delay in visiting each parishioner who has fallen ill. He is to make no distinction as to whom he visits, for all need the healing power of prayer. Once he has ascertained the degree of illness, he shall determine the ministry best suited.

9. On some occasions, when visiting in the privacy of a home, the priest may consider it necessary or advisable to have a deacon or another person accompany him.

10. The priest must not neglect to attend to the spiritual needs of shut-ins, who for reasons of poor health are unable to attend Divine Services regularly. Through frequent and scheduled visitations by the priest and fellow parishioners, the shut-in is reminded of his place in the fellowship of the Church and of the importance and blessing of being part of the parish community.

11. By virtue of his office, the parish rector has supervision over every organization of the parish. He directs the life, activities, and administration of the parish. Nevertheless, the priest must work in harmony with all the faithful and the parish council, which has an active role in parish life.

12. The rector is the presiding officer at the annual parish meeting. At his discretion, he may appoint others to chair various sessions of the meeting.

13. A priest or deacon may not absent himself from the diocese for any extended period of time without first receiving explicit permission of his diocesan hierarch. If he has received his hierarch's blessing to serve in another diocese, he will be issued a Certification of Canonical Order, which states that he has obtained the blessing of the other hierarch to serve.

14. When a clergyman plans to make a prolonged visit or vacation to another city where a hierarch resides or where there is a parish, the visiting priest must contact the hierarch or priest and be prepared to show ecclesiastical identification documents obtained from his diocesan hierarch. Clergy on vacation should remember that they are, in fact, still clergy. When visiting other parishes, a clergyman should wear appropriate clerical garb. He should enter into the sanctuary, venerate the Holy Table, greet the rector and other clergy present, and remain

in the altar to serve, or take the place assigned to the clergy. The rector should invite visiting clergy to serve.

15. The clergyman may not accept an invitation from the laity of another parish to celebrate in a parish that has a canonical priest assigned to it. The rector of the parish may, however, make such invitations with the blessing of his hierarch.

To be continued....

About Steadfastness of Faith

St Nikolai of Zicha

"Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Peter 5:9).

Brethren, the most important fortress of the souls of men is the fortress of faith. It is upon this fortress that the devil vehemently attacks with all his arrows and all of his wiles. For the impure and evil spirit knows that when this fortress is destroyed he enslaves the soul of man forever. That is why the holy apostles prayed to the Lord: "Increase our faith" (St. Luke 17:5). Brethren, let us also pray daily that the Lord increases our faith, that He empower and strengthen our faith. The serpent primarily protects its head in danger, which is why the Lord Himself called it wise. Let us also protect the head of our spiritual life which is faith. Nothing in this world can replace faith in God: neither philosophy, nor science, nor treasure, nor glory, neither the entire world from one end to the other with all its transitory illusions. This the devil knows. That is why he especially attacks our faith, instilling doubt in us, causing us to waver, confusing our thoughts and disturbing our hearts. Since the devil knows that faith is the principle thing, it is all the more necessary that we should know it also. Because of us Christ descended to earth, because of us He suffered on the Cross and gave us the covenant of an All-saving Faith. We can neither strengthen faith nor increase faith except through suffering. That is why the much-suffering Apostle Peter says: "That the same afflictions (such as yours) are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." The apostle does not speak of his affliction out of humility but rather speaks of the affliction of our brethren in Christ. One in faith and one in affliction. Brethren, you do not suffer alone for the True Faith but your other brethren also suffer for the same Faith. Let this comfort your afflictions. But most of all let the afflictions of the First-born in suffering, our crucified Lord Jesus Christ Himself, comfort you. O Lord Jesus, Sufferer above the sufferers and Victor above the victors increase our faith and strengthen us with the power of Thy Grace as Thou didst strengthen thy holy apostles.

Upcoming Events 2014

29 July Thirteen-year anniversary of the first Divine Liturgy at St. Maximus
1 August Procession of the Cross, Dormition Fast begins.

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!