

The Confessor's Tongue for October 25, A. D. 2015

Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost; Martyrs Marcian & Matryrius the Notaries
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.

The Sayings of St. Anthony the Great 27

Three Fathers used to go and visit blessed Anthony every year, and two of them used to discuss their thoughts and the salvation of their souls with him, but the third always remained silent and did not ask him anything. After a long time, Abba Anthony said to him, 'You often come here to see me, but you never ask me anything,' and the other replied, 'It is enough for me to see you, Father.'
Saying 27 *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

Commentary: Some imagine that the communication of spiritual truth comes only by words. To this end, religious men have bombarded the world with the printed and spoken word, but to what effect? Today, in a world inundated by words of all kinds competing for man's attention, words seem to have little power to communicate truth or to persuade. Christ Himself said to His disciples that the world would know that they were His disciples, not by their words, their advertising, their broadcasts or podcasts, or their publishing, but by their love for one another. Words without action may be true but bear no weight of authority, like teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees. Christ, who lived what He taught, spoke with an authority that amazed His hearers.

In this saying, we may readily perceive that truth is not communicated only by words. It is likely, of course, that the third monk was edified by hearing the questions of the others and St. Anthony's answers. Very often our spiritual questions are those that others have but are afraid to ask, and our bringing up the topic ends up edifying others who are listening. It takes humility to ask a question, for asking a sincere question reveals the ignorance which pride shirks from revealing.

Yet this is not the primary sense of this saying, as the third monk bears witness. For him, he said, just to see Anthony was enough. How can this be? We all know the expression, "You are a sight for sore eyes!" We know the effect the mere sight of one we love but have not seen for a time has on us, the joy it brings. Even more powerful is the effect seeing a truly holy person can have on us. If you doubt the power of holiness, recall how Moses, after all his conversations with God, wanted to see His face, but God only permitted him to see a part of His glory and his 'hind parts', not His face, as that would have been too much for Moses to bear. Even that limited sight of the glory of the holy God so transfigured Moses that his face shone with an intensity that frightened the Hebrews and led to him veiling his face for their sake while the glory lingered.

We have little experience in our daily lives with human holiness and its effects on others, so we are inclined to dismiss it and rely on words to

communicate truth. But as this case shows, just encountering a holy person, looking upon him, and sitting quietly in his presence watching and listening can affect us powerfully. Indeed the saints (the word 'saint' is the same word in Greek as 'holy'—it could be translated as 'holy one') manifest in themselves the life of God who dwells in them, and God's powerful presence in them affects those around them, so much so that this monk was content merely to see and hear the holy Anthony without speaking. The divine presence in Anthony and Anthony's example instructed and inspired him.

The effect of holiness in others is why Christians have venerated relics, the sanctified remains of holy men of God, which, although separated temporarily from the soul, still participate in the sanctifying uncreated energies of God. The number of healings and miracles attributed to these encounters is incalculable. Even Muslims in the lands they have conquered from Christians gain help and healing from venerating holy relics. The effect of being in the presence of the holy is also why Christians have frequently made pilgrimages to see holy elders.

Furthermore, when we look at the world around us, our fellow parishioners, and our families and wonder why things are so bad, the power of holiness and God's command to "Be holy, for I am holy" makes us aware of the positive effect we can have on others by pursuing holiness. As we grow in true holiness, we make it easier for those around us likewise so to do. This can be said another way in St. Seraphim's famous words: "Acquire the Holy Spirit, and thousands around you will be saved." One reason we don't see more people come to Christ, enter His Church, and remain, one reason we do not see the world becoming a better place, is our own want of holiness. If you want the members of your family to become better, instead of lecturing them on virtue, become more virtuous yourself. If you wish your fellow parishioners to be more Christ-like, instead of complaining about them and being offended, become more like Christ yourself. If you wish your city, your state, even your country to be better, instead of blaming your fellow citizens and the other political party, blame rather yourself and seek to manifest more of Christ's character by God's grace.

To become holy, we have to put ourselves in the presence of what is holy. We live such unholy lives because we spend so much time with what is base and impure. This means above all that we constantly attend the Divine Liturgy and regularly prepare ourselves through prayer, fasting, and frequent Confession to receive the Holy Mysteries with reverence and discernment of what we receive. "The holy things are for the holy"—and those on the road thereto!

Fr. Justin Frederick

Prayers of the Hours for Home Use

Here is a way to pray briefly at a set times during the day which will help us to remember God more frequently and increasingly to approximate prayer without ceasing, using the times and some of the prayers the Church has set for formal prayer.

Pray the Trisagion prayers, then pick the prayer of the hour closest to the time you are praying and use it as indicated. Then after twelve "Lord, Have Mercys", use the general Prayer of the Hours. You may add any other prayers you wish and then close with the concluding prayers. Many of us will find ourselves strengthened against temptations and motivated more to pray at night if we would keep but one of these times.

This 'rule' is short enough to do at work. It is also suggested that one do the prayers for the Ninth Hour upon coming home from work or school, before doing other things at home.

Since we may miss the exact hour, we should know we may pray each hour during a window: the Third Hour any time between 8 and 12, the Sixth Hour from 11 to 3, the Ninth Hour from 2 to 6. Don't let missing the "right time" stop you from praying!

Basic Beginning/Trisagion Prayers

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy on us. Amen.

Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of good things, and Giver of Life: Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (thrice)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, look upon and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

Pick the pray of the appropriate hour and say it three times.

Prayer of the Third Hour (9:00 a.m.)

O Lord, who at the third hour didst send down Thine all-holy Spirit upon Thine Apostles, take not the same from us, O Good One, but renew Him in us who pray unto Thee.

Glory... *repeat*

Now and ever...*repeat*

Prayer of the Sixth Hour (noon)

O Thou who, on the sixth day and at the sixth hour, didst nail to the cross Adam's daring sin in Paradise, tear asunder also the handwriting of our sins, O Christ God, and save us.

Glory... *repeat*

Now and ever...*repeat*

Prayer of the Ninth Hour (3:00 p.m.)

O Thou who at the ninth hour for our sake didst taste of death in the flesh, mortify the presumption of our flesh, O Christ God, and save us.

Glory... *repeat*

Now and ever...*repeat*

Then:

Lord, have mercy (12).

Prayer of the Hours (for any hour of the day or night)

O Thou, who at all times and at every hour, both in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, long-suffering, great in mercy and goodness of heart; who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on sinners; who callest all men to salvation through the tidings of good things to come: do Thou, the same Lord, receive also our prayers at this hour, direct our lives in Thy commandments, sanctify our souls, cleanse our bodies, direct our thoughts, cleanse our minds, and deliver us from every tribulation, wickedness, and affliction; encompass us by Thy holy angels, that guarded and guided by their host, we may become worthy of the unity of the faith and of the understanding of Thine unapproachable glory, for blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Lord, have mercy (3).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious without compare than the seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word: verily, Theotokos, we magnify thee.

O Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, for the sake of the prayers of Thy most pure mother, our venerable and God-bearing fathers, and all the saints, have mercy on me a sinner. Amen.

Thoughts On Prayer from Optina

Prayer is food for the soul. Do not starve the soul, it is better to let the body go hungry. Do not judge anyone, forgive everyone. Consider yourself worse than everyone in the world and you will be saved. As much as possible, be more quiet. *St. Joseph*

Upcoming Events 2015

31 October All-Saints Party 2:30 p.m.

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!