

The Confessor's Tongue for September 21, 2008

14th Sunday After Pentecost: Leavetaking of the Cross; Apostle Quodratius

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.

September 21: Apostle of 70 Quadratus

He was one of the 70 disciples of Jesus Christ and "witness of His God- chosen passions" on the cross. Being bishop in Athens and Magnesia, he zealously enlightened "those who were in the darkness of ignorance", "edifying" pagans "on the foundation of faith" and leading "unbelievers to the divine faith". Having destroyed the "dark madness" of polytheism and "by the word of teaching freeing souls from the rage of every kind of idol", the zealous preacher of the Christian faith underwent many trials and died in the city of Magnesia during the reign of Emperor Hadrian.

September 21: St. Dmitri of Rostov

St. Demetrius, in the world Daniel Tuptalo, was born in Makarov, Kiev Province, and son of a Cossack. Having received his formation in the Kiev Academy, St. Demetrius accepted monasticism and soon became glorified as a preacher of the word of God. He was Hegumen alternately in several monasteries and was elevated to Archimandrite. In 1701, St. Demetrius (during that time Hegumen of the Savior-Transfiguration (Spaso-Preobrazhenskago) Monastery in Novgorod-Seversk) because of his devout life and labors for the good of the Church and country was installed as the Metropolitan of Tobolsk, but because of illness remained in Moscow and soon occupied the cathedra of the Metropolitan of Rostov. In this position he labored hard for the good order of the church and for the exposure of the schismatic (Raskolnik) Old Believers. The private life of Demetrius was filled with great ascetic fasts, prayer and charity. He received the simplest food and in small quantity, but in the Holy Forty Day Fast he ate only once during the first and passion weeks. He often prayed much and advised every one to remember the hour of their death and to pray to the Lord and the Theotokos at each stroke of the hour bell. The hierarch was accessible to all, and was kind and condescending to every one. His charity with food for the widows and orphans was endless: he never refused any one who asked, while he himself was satisfied with only what was necessary. The hierarch died peacefully on October 28, 1709 and was buried, according to his will, in the cathedral church of the Rostov St. James Monastery (see Iaroslavl Diocese). In 1752, when repairing the damaged floor of the church over the tomb of the hierarch, his relics were found incorrupt and now repose openly, flowing with wonderful healing, in the southwest corner of the cathedral temple of St. James Monastery. He was united to the choir of Saints in 1757. St. Demetrius wrote the Reader's Menaion (Chetji-Mineia), containing the lives of the saints pleasing to God for all the 12 months of the year. He devoted about 20 years of his life to this great work.

The Word "Anathema" and Its Meaning

by Saint John Maximovitch

The Greek word "anathema" consists of two words: "ana", which is a preposition indicating movement upwards and "thema", which means a separate part of something. In military terminology, "thema" meant a detachment; in civil government "thema" meant a province. We currently use the word "theme", derived from "thema", to mean a specific topic of a written and intellectual work.

"Anathema" literally means the lifting up of something separate. In the Old Testament this expression was used both in relation to that which was alienated due to sinfulness and likewise to that which was dedicated to God.

In the New Testament, in the writing of the Apostle Paul it is used once in conjunction with "maranatha", meaning the coming of the Lord. The combination of these words means separation until the coming of the Lord; in other words - being handed over to Him (1 Cor 16:22).

The Apostle Paul uses "anathema" in another place without the addition of "maranatha" (Gal 1:8-9). Here "anathema" is proclaimed against the distortion of the Gospel of Christ as it was preached by the Apostle, no matter by whom this might be committed, whether by the Apostle himself or an angel from the heavens. In this same expression there is also implied: "let the Lord Himself pass judgement", for who else can pass judgement on the angels?

St John the Theologian in Revelation (22:3) says that in the New Jerusalem there will not be any anathema; this can be understood in two ways, giving the word anathema both meanings: 1) there will not be any lifting up to the judgement of God, for this judgement has already been accomplished; 2) there will not be any special dedication to God, for all things will be the Holy things of God, just as the light of God enlightens all (Rev 21:23).

In the acts of the Councils and the further course of the New Testament Church of Christ, the word "anathema" came to mean complete separation from the Church. "The Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes", "let him be anathema", "let it be anathema", means a complete tearing away from the church. While in cases of "separation from the communion of the Church" and other epitimia or penances laid on a person, the person remained a member of the Church, even though his participation in her grace filled life was limited, those given over to anathema were thus completely torn away from her until their repentance. Realizing that she is unable to do anything for their salvation, in view of their stubbornness and hardness of heart, the earthly church lifts them up to the judgement of God. That judgment is merciful unto repentant sinners, but fearsome for the stubborn enemies of God. "It is a

fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ... for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 10:31 ; 12:29).

Anathema is not final damnation: until death repentance is possible. "Anathema" is fearsome not because the Church wishes anyone evil or God seeks their damnation. They desire that all be saved. But it is fearsome to stand before the presence of God in the state of hardened evil: nothing is hidden from Him. *from Orthodox Life, vol 27, Mar-April 1977, pp 18,19*

55 Maxims for Christian Living

Fr. Thomas Hopko

1. Be always with Christ.
2. Pray as you can, not as you want.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer that you do by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times a day.
5. Have a short prayer that you constantly repeat when your mind is not occupied with other things.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.
7. Eat good foods in moderation.
8. Keep the Church's fasting rules.
9. Spend some time in silence every day.
10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
11. Go to liturgical services regularly
12. Go to confession and communion regularly.
13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings. Cut them off at the start.
14. Reveal all your thoughts and feelings regularly to a trusted person.
15. Read the scriptures regularly.
16. Read good books a little at a time.
17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
18. Be an ordinary person.
19. Be polite with everyone.
20. Maintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. Exercise regularly.
23. Live a day, and a part of a day, at a time.
24. Be totally honest, first of all, with yourself.
25. Be faithful in little things.
26. Do your work, and then forget it.
27. Do the most difficult and painful things first.
28. Face reality.
29. Be grateful in all things.
30. Be cheerful.
31. Be simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. Never bring attention to yourself.
33. Listen when people talk to you.
34. Be awake and be attentive.
35. Think and talk about things no more than necessary.
36. When we speak, speak simply, clearly, firmly and directly.
37. Flee imagination, analysis, figuring things out.
38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
39. Don't complain, mumble, murmur or whine.
40. Don't compare yourself with anyone.
41. Don't seek or expect praise or pity from anyone.
42. We don't judge anyone for anything.

43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
44. Don't defend or justify yourself.
45. Be defined and bound by God alone.
46. Accept criticism gratefully but test it critically.
47. Give advice to others only when asked or obligated to do so.
48. Do nothing for anyone that they can and should do for themselves.
49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
50. Be merciful with yourself and with others.
51. Have no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
52. Focus exclusively on God and light, not on sin and darkness.
53. Endure the trial of yourself and your own faults and sins peacefully, serenely, because you know that God's mercy is greater than your wretchedness.
54. When we fall, get up immediately and start over.
55. Get help when you need it, without fear and without shame.

Fr. Hopko's maxims come out of his long experience as an Orthodox Christian, a priest, a seminary professor, confessor, dean, and his deep knowledge of the Church's spiritual literature. We do well to ponder them and apply them to our lives. Fr. Justin

From the Desert

Abba Bessarion said, "When you are at peace, without having to struggle, humiliate yourself for fear of being led astray by joy which is inappropriate; we magnify ourselves, and we are delivered to warfare. For often, because of our weakness, God does not allow us to be tempted, for fear we should be overcome." *Sayings of the Desert Fathers, Bessarion 9*

"Abba Isidore of Pelusia said, 'To live without speaking is better than to speak without living. For the former who lives rightly does good even by his silence but the latter does not good even when he speaks. When words and life correspond to one another, they are together the whole of philosophy.'" *Sayings of the Desert Fathers, Isidore of Pelusia 1*

Abba Poemen was asked for whom this saying is suitable, 'Do not be anxious about tomorrow.' The old man said, 'It is said for the man who is tempted and has not much strength, so that he should not be worried, saying to himself, "How long just I suffer this temptation?" He should rather say to himself, "Today.'" *Sayings of the Desert Fathers, Poemen 126*

Upcoming Events 2008

- 21 September, After Liturgy, Blessing of Automobiles
- 21 September, Women's Meeting, 3:00 p.m., at Raina Joines' home.
- 28 September, Men's trip to the Greek Festival at Holy Trinity, Dallas
- 5 October, Sunday: Parish Annual Meeting
- 9 November, Sunday: Visit of Bishops

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!