

The Confessor's Tongue for June 20, 2010

4th Sunday After Pentecost: Hieromartyr Methodius

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

*One day some old men came to see Abba Anthony. In the midst of them was Abba Joseph. Wanting to test them, the old man suggested a text from the Scriptures, and, beginning with the youngest, he asked them what it meant. Each gave his opinion as he was able. But to each one the old man said, 'You have not understood it.' Last of all, he said to Abba Joseph, 'How would you explain this saying?' Abba Joseph replied, 'I do not know.' Then Abba Anthony said, 'Indeed, Abba Joseph has found the way, for he has said: "I do not know."' Saying 17 in *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers**

Commentary: It is said that 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.' Even more dangerous is to think one has knowledge when one doesn't—which is really what having a only a little knowledge about something readily leads one to think. St. Paul writes, "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (I Corinthians 8:2). Pride in what we think we know leads us to speak, to interject our opinions even where they have not been solicited. Paul adds, "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth" (I Cor. 8:1). Knowledge, or supposed knowledge, quickly makes us proud, especially if it is not tempered with love for God and others.

The path to true knowledge begins with humility, with the ability to say, "I don't know." This is the only beginning point for learning; having a teachable spirit, recognizing that one needs to be taught. He who thinks he already knows and his full of himself and his cherished opinions and supposed knowledge can be taught little or nothing.

The youngest monks in their zeal and pride of their own opinion speak readily. Abba Joseph, on the other hand, confesses his ignorance. This is the way, especially to knowledge of God, to admit our ignorance, that whatever we think we know, we really know nothing as we should know it.

We should not take this to mean that the Truth cannot be known, or that we must always abide in ignorance. Knowledge is the virtue of the mind, whereas ignorance is a vice. We are to know the Truth that the Truth may set us free. We are to learn the Faith, summarized in the Creed, and hold to it, ever growing in it. We dare not spend our whole lives sampling a religious smorgasbord as so many do, "always learning, but never coming to a knowledge of the Truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). Rather, we hold to the Truth we have received in the Church from the Apostles (Tradition). But we should never be ashamed to say "I don't know" as we recognize how far short our knowledge of Christ falls of the reality, as we recall that we shall have eternity to go ever deeper into knowing Him without ever exhausting Him.

Fr. Justin Frederick

Antidoron

The Antidoron bread used in the Church has two uses and two distributions. Strictly, its used is

determined by its name: *antidoron* means "in place of the gifts." In other words, it is to be given to those of the faithful who were present but did not commune (the catechumens and others not baptized having already been dismissed). The singing of Psalm 33 is the time appointed to distribute antidoron, when the non-communicating faithful would come forward to receive what could be called a consolation prize from the hand of the priest. At present, in our parish, this distribution of antidoron comes when we venerate the cross and is not limited to those who did not commune. Pastorally, there is a reluctance to have the non-communicants come forward in the sight of all to receive the antidoron, calling attention to their not communing. Thus the current practice of everyone receiving a piece at the end of Liturgy has developed.

The other use of the bread is immediately after Communion for those who communed: they take a piece of bread and a drink of wine to help ensure that they have fully consumed the Mysteries given to them.

A custom related to antidoron has sprung up and become widespread: communicants take an extra piece of antidoron after Communion and give it to someone standing near them who did not commune, and that practice has found its way to our parish. Several things should be understood about this custom that, as always, things may be done decently and in an orderly manner:

1. It is not the norm (i.e. it is not appointed to be done).
2. It is not required than anyone participate in it.
3. It is not required that everyone present receive a piece (they'll get a piece at the end of Liturgy).
4. It is not desirable that anyone take a handful of pieces to pass out to anyone and everyone who did not commune.
5. It can be distracting.
6. It can be confusing for non-Orthodox visitors, who strictly, would not even be present to receive it.
7. Strictly, those not communing receive their antidoron later.
8. Those communing, especially children, should take only one piece for themselves following Communion so that plenty remains for distribution at the end. The antidoron is not meant to be a full breakfast.

This practice was discussed in council this month due to concern that it was becoming disruptive. For now, this practice of communicants giving antidoron after Communion may continue if restraint and care guided by the points above are observed. If you commune and wish to offer a piece to one or two people near you who did not commune, you may. But don't feel must and, if you choose to do it, please be discreet and discerning in how you do it. Otherwise, we may have to return to a stricter practice.

From Time to Eternity: The Internal Mission of the Church, Part 2

St. Justin (Popovich) of Cheliye (+1979)

The Church is the personality of the God-man Christ, a theanthropic organism, not a human organization [*Theanthropic* comes from the Greek words *Theos*, "God", and *anthropos*, "man." It thus means "divine-human", fitting, since Christ whose body it is is the "God-man", or *Theanthropos*.] The Church is indivisible, just like the person of the God-man, just like the body of the God-man. Therefore, it is a fundamental mistake for the indivisible theanthropic organism of the Church to be divided into small ethnic organizations. In their journey through history many local Churches limited themselves to ethnicism, to ethnic purposes and methods. . . The Church would adapt to the people, whereas the norm is the opposite: the people should adapt to the Church. Our own Church [Serbian] often made this mistake. But we know that these were tares of our ecclesiastical life, tares which the Lord does not uproot, but which He leaves to grow together with the wheat until the harvest (Matt. 13:25-28). But our knowledge of this goes for nothing if it is not transformed into prayer that Christ preserve us from becoming sowers and cultivators of such tares.

It is the twelfth hour, it is time for our ecclesiastical representatives to cease being exclusively slaves of ethnicism, and to become hierarchs and priests of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. The mission of the Church which is given by Christ and realized by the Holy Fathers is this: for the awareness and realization to be planted and cultivated in the soul of our people that each member of the Orthodox Church is a catholic person, an eternal and theanthropic person, that he belongs to Christ and for this reason is a brother of all human beings, and a servant of all men and creatures. This is the purpose of the Church given by Christ. Every other purpose is not of Christ but of the antichrist. For our local Church to be the Church of Christ, the catholic Church, she must constantly realize this purpose in our people. By what means can she realize this theanthropic purpose? Once again, the means are none other than the theanthropic ones, because the theanthropic purpose can be realized only through theanthropic means, never with human means or any other whatsoever. On this point the Church differs essentially from everything human and earthly.

The theanthropic means are none other than the theanthropic ascetes-virtues. Only the theanthropic virtues exist among them in an organic relation. The one springs from the other, the one completes the other.

The first among the ascetes-virtues is the ascesis of faith. Through this ascesis the soul of our people must pass and constantly pass: that is, this soul must be given up to Christ without reservations and compromises, must go deeply into the theanthropic

depths, and be elevated to the theanthropic heights. The awareness must be created in our people that the faith of Christ is a supranational, ecumenical and catholic, trinitarian virtue, and that for one to believe in Christ means to serve Christ and only Christ, in all aspects of one's life.

The second is the theanthropic virtue of prayer and fasting. This virtue must become a method of life for our Orthodox people; it must become the soul of its soul, because prayer and fasting are the almighty means given by Christ for purification from every impurity — not only of the human being, but also of society and of the people, and of humanity. Prayer and fasting are able to cleanse the soul of our people from our impurities and from our sins. (Matt. 17:19-21; Luke 9:17-29). The soul of our people must be identified with the Orthodox life of prayer. Prayer and fasting must be performed not only for individuals, not only for the people, but for everyone and for everything (in all and for all): for friends and enemies, those who persecute and kill us, because this is what distinguishes Christians from pagans (Matt. 5:44-45).

The third theanthropic virtue is the theanthropic virtue of love. This love has no boundaries. It does not ask who is worthy and who is not; it loves everyone: it loves friends and enemies, it loves sinners and criminals (but it does not love their sins and crimes); it blesses those who curse, and like the sun it enlightens both the wicked and the good (Matt. 5:45-46). This theanthropic love must be cultivated in our people, because by this catholicity Christian love is distinguished from the love of the other self-styled and relative loves: from pharisaical, humanistic, altruistic, ethnic, animal love. The love of Christ is always total love. This love is acquired through prayer, because it is a gift of Christ. And the Orthodox heart prays with intensity: O Lord of love, give me Thy love for all people and for all things!

To be continued...

From St. Moses of Optina (+1862)

"We must bear one another's spiritual infirmities cheerfully, without bitterness. After all, if someone is physically ill, not only are we not offended with him, but we even help him in any way we can. That is how we must treat spiritual illnesses also."

Abbot Moses counselled everyone to keep what he called St. Dorotheos's rule for being at peace: "Do not want things to turn out as you wouldlike, but what whatever happens. That way you will be at peace with everyone....One who does not have his own will always gets his way. Since he has not desire of his own, no matter what happens with him, he is content—and so it turns out that he always fulfills his desires, for he does not want things to turn out as he wishes, but as they do turn out."

Upcoming Events 2010

4, 11 July: Fr. Justin gone; Fr. Christopher Allen here

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!