

The Confessor's Tongue for July 3, A. D. 2011

Third Sunday After Pentecost: Martyr Hyacinth

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.

July 3: Martyr Hyacinth

Saint Hyacinthus, a native of Caesarea in Cappadocia, was raised in a Christian family. The emperor Trajan made the boy his "cubicularius" (chamberlain), unaware that he was a secret Christian.

One day, while the emperor and his entourage were offering sacrifice to idols, the young Hyacinthus remained at the palace, shut himself up in a small room, and prayed fervently to the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the servants overheard him praying and denounced him to the emperor. He said that although Hyacinthus was entrusted with an imperial position, he did not honor the Roman gods, and was secretly praying to Christ.

Hyacinthus was brought to trial before Trajan, who tried to persuade him to deny Christ and sacrifice to the deaf and dumb idols, but the holy martyr remained steadfast and declared that he was a Christian. He was whipped and thrown into prison, where the only food given to him was what had already been offered to the idols. They hoped that he would be overcome with hunger and thirst and eat it. St Hyacinthus did not eat the food, and he died after thirty-eight days. When they came to torture him again, they found his dead body.

The jailer saw two angels in the cell. One covered the saint's body with his own garment, and the other placed a crown of glory on his head.

The twelve-year-old Hyacinthus suffered for Christ in the year 108 in the city of Rome. Later, the saint's relics were transferred to Caesarea.

From St. John Cassian *Conference 5*

It is impossible for a person to deserve to triumph over a passion before he has understood that he is not able to obtain victory in the struggle by his own diligence and his own effort, even though in order to be cleansed he must always be careful and attentive day and night.

Episcopal Search for the Diocese of the South

The DOS Deans along with Bishop Nikon will seek out prospective candidates and require a biography and/or curriculum vitae (and any other supporting information such as occasional articles, publications, or lectures) from each of them. To help facilitate this the DOS Deans have already been given a list of potential candidates that have been vetted by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America. In addition, each of the deans has been asked to solicit potential candidates from each of the priests and his respective parish or mission within his deanery. Bp Nikon has set July 31, 2011, as the deadline for submission of potential candidates. At

A publication of St. Maximus Orthodox Church, 2026 West Oak, Denton, TX, 76201 (940) 565-6753

minimum the statutory requirements to be considered a candidate must be met.

If any of you have names of candidates you would like to submit for consideration, please do so. *Fr. Justin*

Theology in Poetry

George Herbert, a pious seventeenth century English priest, was also a well-known poet. In his work *The Temple*, a collection of poems about Christian life, he begins with this poem, *The Church Porch*, in which he describes the catechumenate, the time of repentance in preparation to entering the Church proper. This is offered here in the poet's original hope that "a verse may find him who a sermon flies". Further installments may be coming (the poem runs 77 stanzas). It is best to read poetry aloud.

The Church Porch 1-13 (On Lust & Wine, &c.) *George Herbert*

Thou, whose sweet youth and early hopes enhance
Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure;
Harken unto a Verser, who may chance
Rhyme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure.
A verse may find him, who a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice.

Beware of lust: it doth pollute and foul
Whom God in Baptism washed with His own blood.
It blots thy lesson written in thy soul;
The holy lines cannot be understood.
How dare those eyes upon a Bible look,
Much less towards God, whose lust is all their
book?

Abstain wholly, or wed. Thy bounteous Lord
Allows thee choice of paths: take no byways;
But gladly welcome what he doth afford;
Not grudging, that thy lust hath bounds and stays.
Contenance hath his joy: weigh both; and so
If rottenness have more, let Heaven go.

If God had laid all common, certainly
Man would have been th'incloser: but since now
God hath impaled us, on the contrary
Man breaks the fence, and every ground will plough.
O what were man, might he himself misplace!
Sure to be cross he would shift feet and face.

Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame,
When once it is within thee; but before
Mayst rule it, as thou list; and pour the shame,
Which it would pour on thee, upon the floor.
It is most just to throw that on the ground,
Which would throw me there, if I keep the
round.

He that is drunken, may his mother kill

Big with his sister; he hath lost the reins,
Is outlawed by himself: all kind of ill
Did with his liquor slide into his veins.
The drunkard forfeits Man, and doth devest
All worldly right, save what he hath by beast.

Shall I, to please another's wine-sprung mind,
Lose all mine own? God hath giv'n me a measure
Short of his can, and body; must I find
A pain in that, wherein he finds a pleasure?
Stay at the third glass: if thou lose thy hold,
Then thou art modest, and the wine grows bold.

If reason not move gallants, quit the room,
(All in a shipwreck shift their several way)
Let not a common ruin thee entomb:
Be not a beast in courtesy; but stay,
Stay at the third cup, or forego the place.
Wine above all things doth God's stamp deface.

Yet, if thou sin in wine or wantonness,
Boast not thereof; nor make thy shame thy glory.
Frailty gets pardon by submissiveness;
But he that boasts, shuts that out of his story.
He makes flat war with God, and doth defy
With his poor clod of earth the spacious sky.

Take not His name, who made thy mouth, in vain:
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse.
Lust and wine plead a pleasure, avarice gain:
But the cheap swearer through his open sluice
Lets his soul run for nought, as little fearing.
Where I an *Epicure*, I could bate swearing.

When thou dost tell another's jest, therein
Omit the oaths, which true wit cannot need:
Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sin.
He pares his apple, that will cleanly feed.
Play not away the virtue of that name,
Which is thy best stake, when griefs make thee tame.

The cheapest sins most dearly punished are;
Because to shun them also is so cheap:
For we have wit to mark them, and to spare.
O crumble not away thy soul's fair heap.
If thou wilt die, the gates of hell are broad:
Pride and full sins have made the way a road.

Lie not; but let thy heart be true to God,
Thy mouth to it, thy actions to them both:
Cowards tell lies, and those that fear the rod;
The stormy working soul spits lies and froth.
Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie:
A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.

Daily Bread
St. Gregory of Nyssa

When we say to God, "Give bread," we do not ask for delights, riches, and flowery robes. We do not seek the beauty of gold, the glow of precious stones, and vessels of silver. We do not request an abundance of land, the command of armies, superiority in war,

and governance over nations. We do not desire horses, cattle, and herds of other grazing animals. We do not aspire to possess a host of slaves, pomp in the marketplace, and acclamation by setting up monuments or public portraits. We do not yearn for silk garments and musical ensembles. We ask for none of these by which the soul is distracted from the divine and noble cares. We pray only for bread.

Do you perceive the breadth of divine wisdom and the wealth of teachings contained in these brief words? It is as if the Divine Word cries aloud to His listeners all but the following: Stop adding to the causes of suffering on your own selves. Your obligation to human nature is only a small thing. To your flesh you owe food, a modest and easily accessible thing, if your purpose is to meet only a need.

Why do you multiply burdens on yourself? For what reason do you subject yourself to the yoke of so many debts? Why do you mine for silver and dig for gold and search after transparent stones? Certainly, because through these things to be able to procure enjoyment of the belly—this insatiable tax collector—to whom the only obligation is really bread which fulfills what is needed for the body.

You trade as far as India. You risk life in unknown seas and commit yourself to annual voyages to fetch products to season your food. You are not mindful of the fact that the pleasure of spices reaches no further than the palate. The same is true of whatever is lovely or aromatic or savory—it provides only some quick and fleeting sensation of delight. What passes beyond the palate is marked by no difference, since nature equally changes all things into a foul odor. Do you see the outcome of artful cooking? Do you see the final result of gourmet allurements?

Instead ask for bread to meet life's needs. You are obligated by nature to the body only in this regard. Whatever else is contrived by the minds of pleasure seekers, it belongs to the extraneous act of sowing weeds. The seed of the housemaster is wheat and from wheat bread is made. But luxury is derived from the weeds that the enemy has sown among the wheat. Human beings have left aside what is necessary by nature and, as the Divine Word somewhere says, they are choked by the pursuit of vain cares. Thus they remain unfruitful because the soul is continuously engaged with useless cares.

Upcoming Events 2011

29 July, 8:00 p.m. Chantus Maximus Concert.
29-31 July: Ten-Year Anniversary Celebration with Metropolitan Jonah, Archbishop Dmitri, and Bishop Nikon. Tickets on sale now.
31 July: Deadline for submitting names of candidates to the episcopacy of the Diocese of the South
1-14 August, Dormition Fast.

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!