

The Confessor's Tongue for June 10, A. D. 2012

First Sunday after Pentecost: All Saints

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.

A Bee or a Fly: Which Would You Be?

Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain

I know from experience that in this life people are divided in[to] two categories. A third category does not exist; people either belong to one or the other. The first one resembles the fly. The main characteristic of the fly is that it is attracted by dirt. For example, when a fly is found in a garden full of flowers with beautiful fragrances, it will ignore them and will go sit on top of some filth found on the ground. It will start messing around with it and feel comfortable with the bad smell. If the fly could talk, and you asked it to show you a rose in the garden, it would answer: "I don't even know what a rose looks like. I only know where to find garbage, toilets, and dirt." There are some people who resemble the fly. People belonging to this category have learned to think negatively, and always look for the bad things in life, ignoring and refusing the presence of good.

The other category is like the bee, whose main characteristic is to always look for something sweet and nice to sit on. When a bee is found in a room full of dirt and there is a small piece of sweet in a corner, it will ignore the dirt and will go to sit on top of the sweet. Now, if we ask the bee to show us where the garbage is, it will answer, "I don't know. I can only tell you where to find flowers, sweets, honey, and sugar; it only knows the good things in life and is ignorant of all evil." This is the second category of people who have positive thinking, and see only the good side of things. They always try to cover up the evil in order to protect their fellow men; on the contrary, people in the first category try to expose the evil and bring it to the surface.

When someone comes to me and starts accusing other people and puts me in a difficult situation, I tell him the above example. Then I ask him to decide to which category he wishes to belong so he may find people of the same kind to socialize with.

"The spirituality of a person is defined by the quality of his thoughts. One day, three men were sitting in a park chatting. Suddenly, a young man hastily ran by them. When they saw him, they all thought something.

The first one thought, "He must have stolen something, so he is running to escape. The second one thought: "He must be late for his date with some girl—that is why he is running." And the third one said to himself: "Most probably he is a chanter in a church and runs to be on time for the service."

Three men had three different thoughts about the same person. However, only the last one, who had a positive thought, was benefited, whereas the other two were spiritually harmed.

The Preciousness of Time

Bishop Jeremiah the Recluse

What is the most valuable thing on earth? Time. Because it is in time that all is acquired and in time that all the works of humans are accomplished. If you have food, clothing, enormous houses, glory, and knowledge—if you have absolutely everything—and yet do not have time, you have nothing. What is worst of all for men on earth? The loss of time. For having lost our time, we can no longer acquire anything nor have anything; by wasting time we lose everything, we lose even ourselves.

Another question: what do people treasure the least? What do they randomly squander the most? It is time as well. The majority live carelessly, according to accepted tradition, from day to day, year to year, not concerning themselves with how they have wasted their days and years, how they have spent their lives. We often lament the loss of frivolous things, yet we have neither regret nor sorrow when we waste not some small change, but precious minutes of time. That is why the Holy Apostle Paul, in warning us against the vain waste of time, commands us wisely to dispose of every minute of our lives: *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* By saying 'redeeming the time,' the Apostle shows that it is with time that true good is purchased, just as all things needed for physical life are bought with money and that, likewise, the proper use of time is very similar to the use of money in expert hands. The wise householder does not waste a single penny. He properly budgets the entire sum he has, and allots a goal for every penny. He properly budgets the entire sum he has, and allots a goal for every penny. This is exactly how we should manage our time. We must properly budget it; every hour and minute should be assigned for some good goal. Each day should be spent in good deeds that benefit our neighbor and us. For it is not for idleness, nor for frivolous activity, that the Lord has assigned each minute of our life, even if it were to last a thousand years on this earth.

There is a story that has been told that can be beneficial for us to consider here:

The story holds that some time ago Satan called together the entire host of the lower realm because he wished to send another of his diabolical assistants to earth.

When they had all assembled, he asked them: "Who is willing to go to earth to assist me with the destruction of souls?"

A certain demon volunteer to go. "And what is your plan for assisting me with the destruction of souls?" asked Satan/

"I will tell them that there is no hell," replied the demon.

"No, we have tried that, it will never do," Satan said. "For it turns out that within the heart of every human there is a sense of justice; consequently, no matter how much they try to deny it, or are otherwise taught, humanity still senses that there must be a state of existence in opposition to God. They will never be convinced beyond question that there is not hell. Your plan will surely fail."

A second demon said, "I will go."

Again Satan asked, "What is your plan for assisting me with the destruction of souls?"

"I will tell humans that there is no heaven."

"No," Satan replied again. "We have tried that also, and it is no better. For as we know all too well, every human retains within himself something of the image of God his Creator; hence, while they often wish they could deny it, they will never fully be convinced that there is no heaven. No, your plan will not work."

A third demon came forward.

Satan asked this one as well, "What is your plan for assisting me with the destruction of souls?"

"I will tell them," said the demon, "that there is no hurry, that they have all the time in the world."

"Go!" shouted Satan, "for your plan will surely succeed. Every human has a sense of both heaven and hell, but if we can keep them from considering their eternal destiny, then hell will certainly grab them before they take hold of heaven."

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Homily on the Twofold Mystery of Marriage

St. Nicholas of Zicha (+1956)

It is a great mystery when a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife. The Apostle himself, who has been raised to the third heaven and beheld many heavenly mysteries, calls the marriage of natural man on earth a great mystery. It is the mystery of love and life, and the only mystery that exceeds it is the mystery of Christ's link with His Church. Christ calls Himself the Bridegroom and the Church His Bride. Christ so loved the Church that He left His heavenly Father for her—though remaining equal with Him in unity of essence and divinity—and came down to earth and clave to His Church. He suffered for her sake that He might, by His Blood, cleanse her from sin and from all impurity and make her worthy to be called His Bride. He warms the Church with His love, feeds her with His blood, and enlivens, enlightens, and adorns her with His Holy Spirit. As a man is to his wife, so Christ is to the Church. Man is the head of woman, and Christ is the Head of the Church. A woman obeys her husband, and the Church obeys Christ. A man loves His wife as his own flesh, and Christ loves the Church as His own flesh. A man loves his wife as he does himself, and a wife is in awe of her husband. Christ loves the Church as His own self, and the Church is in awe of Christ. As no one hates his own flesh, but gives it warmth and food, so also Christ

gives warmth and food to the Church as His own flesh. Each individual human soul is the bride of Christ the Husband, and the community of all the faithful is the bride of Christ the Husband. The relationship of any one believer with Christ and that of the whole Church with Christ is essentially the same. Christ is the Head of that great Body that is called the Church, and which is in part visible and in part invisible.

Oh my brethren, this is a great mystery. It is revealed to us according to the measure of our love for Christ, and of our fear of His judgment.

O Lord and gracious Savior, cleanse Thou our souls and save and adorn them, that they may be worthy of that deathless and indescribable unity with Thee, in time and in eternity. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Comment: Contemporary redefinitions of marriage serve to obscure, not illumine, the relationship between Christ and His Church. This compels us who are in Christ to work on our marriages that they image Christ and the Church as part of our proclamation of the Gospel to the world, regardless of how the world may distort and debase its own conceit of marriage. Christ's relationship to the Church is the prototype of marriage; our marriages at their best are but icons of the prototype. How great is the vocation of the married: to set forth in their own marriage an accurate image of Christ and His Church! How short of this we too often fall! More is at stake in our marriages than we commonly imagine. Fr. Justin

News from the Mission Council

The mission council has appointed Michael Rehmet to be our parish lay representative at the upcoming Diocesan Assembly in Miami.

June Namedays

- 1 Fr. Justin Frederick (St. Justin of Chelye)
- 1 Jared Rovny (St. Justin Martyr)
- 9 Ben Lyda (Callum-St. Columba of Iona)
- 10 Olive Betz (St. Olive of Palermo)
- 24 Ian Rehmet (St. John the Baptist)
- 29 Doug & Peter Johnson (Apostles Paul & Peter)
- 30 James Lydon (Apostle James)

June Birthdays

- 4 Mary Madeleine Birtisiel (2001)
- 9 Colin Stokes (2010)
- 22 Benjamin Tolleson
- 23 Eliana Lyda (2011)
- 24 Ian Rehmet

Upcoming Events 2012

- 11-28 June: Apostles' Fast
- 29 June: Feast of SS Peter and Paul.
- 16-20 July: Diocese of the South Diocesan Assembly and special assembly to elect a new bishop.
- 3 September: Labor Day Picnic
- 30 September: St. Maximus Annual Meeting

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!