

# The Confessor's Tongue for October 7, A. D. 2012

18th Sunday after Pentecost: Matyrs Sergius & Bacchus, Virgin Martyr Pelagia  
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.

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## The Path to Confession

Fr. Artemy Vladimirov

*This is an excerpt from a book written to help children prepare for Confession but which also holds much benefit for adults who peruse it.*

### Anger, Irritability, & Fighting

Now it is time to repent of our sins of anger and irritability. You all know how captivating this passion is. It begins with small things, like the loss of affection and attentiveness, and little by little we become less tenderhearted, thoughtful, and amiable toward others. Just watch, scarcely has cold indifference taken up residence in our soul, that we begin to see other uninvited guests: hard-heartedness, secret hostility, a feeling of vexation, displeasure, neglect. . . .

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

If you have never repented of this, if you haven't accused yourself of it before God, if you haven't admitted it in confession to the priest, your soul is already oppressed by irritability. In such a state we easily say sharp, thoughtless words. We sting our neighbors and then try to offend them even more deeply...evil is ready to celebrate its forthcoming victory over us!

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

It is terrifying, my friends, to forget even for a moment that each man is a highly valued creature of God, for whose sake the Savior shed His Blood on the Cross. If we remembered this, would sarcastic and biting remarks drop from our lips? Would we be able—like filth flies on a dung heap—to carry unchecked rumors about our neighbors, to slander, and even smear them...?

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord.*

And now let's turn to those who quarrel. Even wolf and bear cubs don't do the things done by children who are bitten with irritability! How their faces change, how their expressions become hideous and deformed! Where, in the wink of an eye, do that jolly smile and happy childish laughter vanish? Why to the eyes become dark and glimmer strangely with malicious fire, the face distorted, the lips pale, the chin trembling? This is how the passion of anger outwardly defiles a person.

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

Have you seen fighters like this? Like young roosters, they fly at each other with claws, feet, and teeth; clumps of hair fly; sleeves are ripped to shreds. How ashamed their parents feel... Most of the time it is boys that fight, but now we even see it among girls.

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

Even after the brawl, a fire of anger continues to smolder in the heart already blackened with soot and ashes. The devil is the complete master of such an unhappy person.

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

The violent, bitter soul, sickened with resentment, nurses its plans for revenge, shouting aloud at his absent enemy, reviling and wreaking vengeance upon him in his imagination. Truly the demons are overshadowing this soul!

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

Probably the most terrible sin is when we take malicious delight in evil: the dismal, unnatural joy we feel when we hear about the misfortune of someone who has offended us.

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

Repent, fighters, squabblers, bullies! Repent, also, those of you who love to pour oil on the fire, egging on the fighters to even more deadly sins.

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

Has any of us fallen to such a low level that we helped gang up on someone—one boy cruelly attacked by many? (The mark of cowards!)

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

My friends, swiftly climb from the dismal depths of evil and anger, which deliver the soul to death, the soul which was crated to charity, compassion, love, and self-sacrifice. Who can soften the sorrow brought about by the remembrance of our own sins or by brooding over the imperfection of others?

Let us turn for help to the Holy Great Martyr and Trophy-Bearer George, the renowned warrior whose heart manifests the noble qualities of courage and decisiveness. He is ready to lay down his life for his friends, and his demeanor is full of gentleness, respect for his elders, and charity to the sick and infirm. How noble, how beautiful is the image of the victorious Great Martyr! His countenance is lined with suffering, his armor denotes a will as firm as steel, ready at every moment to fulfill the commands of Christ the Savior....

Before we continue, we must understand that it is not forbidden for Christians to stand up for the helpless, to snatch the weak from the hands of the evildoer, to rise up and defend the downtrodden and persecuted truth. The Savior clearly said, "Greater love hath no man than that this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Christ did this Himself, and among the countless martyrs who have trodden the path of sacrificial love, the Church counts all those Christian warriors who have fallen on the field of battle for the faith and the Motherland.

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

Afflicted by the disease of pride and self-love, children and teenagers often ignore the wise advice and warnings of their parents and brush aside their rightful requests like pesky flies. Instead, they trust in their own nonexistent experience and upset mother with rudeness, caddishness, and disrespect. Often they provoke an argument, causing a scene. Captured

by the devil, they use foul language and even dare to raise their hand against the one who gave them birth.

*Forgive us, Merciful Lord!*

My dear readers, I grieve with you for these unhappy youths who hold nothing sacred. It is sternly said about them in the Bible, "Cursed is he who provokes his mother's anger and who leaves his father without help, the same is a blasphemer."

*O Merciful Lord, enlighten all disrespectful teenagers and help them repent of these heavy sins!*

We write about these harsh sins so that you will know that it is only a single step from a small transgression to a great: "He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

But now, let us look to our holy Guardian Angel, who was given to us by God at the hour of our baptism and who is woven from the virtues of meekness, obedience, and humility! Do you see, my friends, how unutterably beautiful his face is, how light the countenance of this heavenly being! True meekness and humility have nothing in common with being a weak, spineless "loser," as the ignorant say. Obedience to God's law not only did not diminish this blessed creature but actually strengthened his will for good, making his mind light-bearing and his heart pure. Keep watching—a holy, imperishable energy of unearthly joy, peace, and love shines forth from him. Angel of God, our holy guardian, teach us how to overcome the dismal pride in our souls!

### **From the Bylaws: the Mission Council**

*Section 1 Composition.* The Parish Council is composed of five (5), seven (7), or nine (9) persons, according to the needs of The Parish, nominated at the annual Parish Meeting and confirmed by the Diocesan Bishop. Only one member of a household may serve on the Parish Council during a given year.

*Section 2 Officers.* Each year at the first meeting of the Parish Council following the annual Parish Meeting, the members of the Council shall elect from among their number the Parish officers to serve for one year. The officers are: Warden (or Senior Warden), Treasurer, and Recording Secretary. There may also be a Junior Warden, an Assistant Treasurer, and a Corresponding Secretary, if there are enough Council members and the needs of the Parish warrant additional officers. The remaining members are designated Councilmen.

*Section 4 Eligibility.* A voting member of the Parish who has been a member of the Parish for one year is eligible for election to the Parish Council. A Council member who has served two consecutive terms may not be elected to a third consecutive term. He becomes eligible again, however, after he has been off the Council for one year. The Parish Council will elect its three principal officers, that is, the Warden (or Senior Warden), the Treasurer, and the Recording Secretary only from those members of the Council who have been members of the Parish for at least two years.

In addition to the technical qualification of one-year membership in the Parish, members of the Parish Council must be zealous for the Orthodox Faith; regular communicants at the Eucharist; active in the Parish; willing to work for the improvement, both spiritual and temporal, of the Parish; not contentious and rebellious against the authority of the Church; not motivated to seek office out of pride, but only out of a strong desire to work for the Lord and for the upbuilding of His Church. Specifically, no one who fulfills only the minimum requirement of receiving the Sacraments; who is known to be rebellious against the Church, the Diocese, the Bishop, or the rector or priest-in-charge; who promotes divisions and factions among the membership; who is a member of the Masonic lodge, the Rosicrucians, or any similar secret or esoteric society; and who is not regular in his attendance at church services should ever be elected to a position of leadership in the Parish.

Wives of priests and deacons assigned or attached to the parish, widows excepted, are not eligible for membership on the Parish Council.

Deacons and priests other than the rector or priest-in-charge assigned or attached to the Parish may sit as non-voting members of the Parish Council at the discretion of the rector or priest-in-charge.

*Section 8 Removal from the Parish Council.* All Parish Council members must continue to fulfill the qualifications for membership in the Parish Council during their entire tenure of office. Failure to retain membership as described in Article III, Section 1, will bring automatic dismissal from the Council. All Parish Council members are expected to attend all Council meetings during their tenure of office. The absence of any Council member for three (3) consecutive meetings will render him subject to dismissal. Any Council member who, during his tenure of office, engages in divisive or rebellious activities, who endeavors to create factions, or brings disharmony to or disturbs the peace of the Parish is subject to dismissal.

Although the rector or the priest-in-charge initiates all dismissal procedures, the Diocesan Bishop, through the district dean, may intervene in cases in which a Council member becomes subject to dismissal for the causes stated in this Section.

*The full text of the Uniform Parish Bylaws of the Diocese of the South are available from your priest and from the DOS website.*

### **Upcoming Events 2012**

30 September: St. Maximus Annual Meeting  
31 October: All Saints Party  
21 January 2013: Feast of St. Maximus and the First Annual St. Maximus Memorial Lecture

**GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!**