

The Confessor's Tongue for June 30, A. D. 2013

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.

On the Perfection Human Beings Can Achieve

St. Nicodemos of Athos (+1809)

All the saved ones may be divided into six ranks and orders. And the first rank is when someone for the fear of God and hell, keeps some of the divine commandments like a slave; and the second rank is when someone keeps the Master's commandments for the reward of the Kingdom of Heaven, as a paid servant; the third rank is when someone keeps the Lord's commandments and only for the sake of God's love, as a friend; and the fourth and superior rank is when someone reaches the point of becoming a son or daughter of God according to grace to whom the inheritance of the Kingdom of God is given according the apostolic saying, "If a son, than an heir of God" (Galatians 4:7). The fifth and higher rank is when someone becomes worthy to become a brother of Christ, and for this brotherhood, becomes with Christ an inheritor of the Kingdom of God in accordance with the Apostles' saying, "The heirs of God, but also co-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). Most high of all the ranks is when someone becomes worthy to become mother of Christ in accordance with the word of Christ Himself, who said, "Here are my mothers and my brothers: whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, my sister, my mother" (Matthew 12:49-50).

Sunday of All Saints

In addition the usual glorifications of the resurrection of Christ, on this Sunday the choirs of all the Saints pleasing to God, who have shone through faith in the coming and the arrival of the promised Redeemer, together with those who exercised asceticism in piety are glorified. In the church hymns we magnify: patriarchs, forefathers, prophets, apostles, martyrs, hieromartyrs, confessors, hierarchs, venerable and righteous fathers and mothers* and all the Saints, who from the ages were well pleasing to God, and "above all" "our Sovereign Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary". In glorifying their memory, let us also ask their prayerful petitions before God for us. Since "by the Holy Spirit is every soul enlivened", i.e. is cleansed, renewed, and settled, and since the divine grace of the Holy Spirit is consecrated, it has made our first-born brethren, written in the heavens, and made them our worthy prayer books before God, that, they have celebrated the most glorious descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and who glorified His beneficial power, consecrating the souls of all believers, then to properly glorify also those holy foster children of the grace of God, who were consecrated and perfected by the power of the All-holy and Life-creating Spirit of the Lord. This commemoration also fulfills the honoring and glorifying of those pleasing to God,

who, owing to their numbers and their not being known, special commemorations were not established for them. Glorifying the saints and numbering them among the ranks or choirs, the Holy Church points out to us their various virtues for imitation.

**The Orthodox Church honors various men pleasing to God who appropriated various names, corresponding to their various ascetic acts of virtuous life on earth. Such names are: patriarchs, forefathers, prophets, apostles, hierarchs, holy equal to the Apostles, Hieromartyrs, Great Martyrs, Venerable martyrs, martyrs, confessors, Venerable ones, Righteous ones, Disinterested ones [unmercenary healers] and Blessed ones.*

Patriarchs, Forefathers and Fathers are the ancestors of Christ, of the Hebrew people, and all the righteous ones of the Old Covenant.

Prophets are great according to the pious life of the men of the Old Testament who were selected by God Himself and were sent by Him to various places for predicting the future to the people, with regard to the coming of Christ, the Savior of the world, to earth.

Apostles are the great men of the New Testament, the people closest to Christ the Savior, His worthiest disciples and companions, who were sent by Him to various countries for the preaching of the Divine Gospel to the people.

Hierarchs and Fathers ("our Fathers among the saints") are the Eastern Patriarchs, the pious Popes of Rome, the Patriarchs, Archbishops, heirs to the Holy Apostles in the Christian Church and their great co-workers in preaching the Gospel and in their labor of true piety.

Holy Equal to the Apostles and Enlighteners are the men and women of royal or princely origin, but sometimes also of simple calling, who by their own preaching turned entire countries and peoples to Christ.

Hieromartyrs are Christian bishops and presbyters who died from torture for their belief in Christ.

Great martyrs are the pious men and women of various worldly ranks and positions, who courageously and with great patience thoroughly underwent various persecutions, tortures, and torments by their torturers for their holy Christian faith.

Venerable Martyrs are the pious and true ascetic men and women, included in the monastic calling, who suffered from the pagans and heterodox believers for their faith in Christ.

Martyrs are those men and women of various callings and positions, who without confusion, but sometimes even with joy, went one by one or in groups into the presence of their torturers, and there were tortured to death for their firm and unshakable confession of their faith in Christ.

Confessors and *Passion-bearers* are those great men of virtuous life of the Christian Church, courageously and fearlessly everywhere and always confessed their deep faith in Christ, who openly recognized themselves as true Christians, who endured torments and torture for this, but did not receive a martyr's death; some of them are called *branded*, because during torture special brands were put on the person.

Venerable Ones are the great, pious and Christ-loving men and women, desert-dwellers, hermits (who separated themselves from the world to the desert and there saved themselves in solitude), recluses (who voluntarily enclosed themselves in separate caves and cells for their entire life) and pillar-dwellers (who practiced asceticism under the open sky on pillars, or high towers), silent ones (who voluntarily took up the asceticism of silence), and are all inclusive in the monastic calling.

Righteous Ones are the great men and women, who were glorified for their virtuous and pious life, zealous for the fulfillment of the commandments of God and for their unbowed observance of the truths of the Gospel teaching, not shirking their family or public obligations and living in the world.

Disinterested Ones or *Unmercenaries* are those well pleasing to God who through their unmercenary labor for the benefit of their neighbors served the suffering and healed the sick without taking payment.

Blessed Ones are the men and women of various callings and positions, who in carrying out their mortal life, both in the world and in the desert, with unusual reserve, with extreme deprivation and denial of every possible worldly good, but sometimes even with many varieties of foolishness, all this "for the sake of Christ".

Liturgical Prayer for the Non-Orthodox

The pious that know well our divine services, understand that when the Church gathers, She prays first for those of the household of Faith, and then for "all mankind." In the prayers of the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, we pray:

"... raise the infants, guide the young, support the aged, encourage the fainthearted, reunite the separated; lead back those who are in error and join them to Thy holy, catholic, and apostolic Church; free those held captive by unclean spirits; sail with those who sail, travel with those who travel by land and by air; defend the widows; protect the orphans, free the captives, heal the sick. . . . And remember Thyself, O God, all those whom we have not remembered through ignorance, forgetfulness, or the multitude of names; since Thou knowest the name of each even from his mother's womb."

At the liturgical services of our Orthodox Church and more particularly during the Divine Liturgy, we do pray for non-Orthodox people—be they Christians or non-Christians. We pray for all mankind.

We do not, however, pray *by name* at the Divine Liturgy or other liturgical services for any non-

Orthodox. In private prayers in our homes we may, do, and should pray by name for non-Orthodox people, but not in the assembly of the Church by name. Why?

St. Philaret of Moscow (+1867) provides us with an understanding. He writes:

"It is one thing to pray that non-Orthodox churches be united to the Orthodox Church in a broad structure of prayers which embrace the whole world, and it is another to commemorate non-Orthodox in the diptych (the Commemoration Books of the Living and Departed) during the Mystery of the Eucharist. The heterodox, by their very heterodoxy, have separated themselves from the communion of the Mysteries of the Orthodox Church. In consequence of this, they are not commemorated during the Mystery of the Eucharist and are excluded from the diptychs."

Again, while we pray in general for all mankind, we do not at the public services pray particularly by name for the non-Orthodox. If the Church allowed for this kind for prayer, harm would be done. How and in what way?

The Elder St. Joseph of Optina (+1911) says the following:

"Are many Orthodox Christians firm in the Faith they confess? Do not the greater portion of them have something of a weak faith, like a spark which might be extinguished at any give moment? And if such people were to hear in Orthodox Churches the commemoration for the health or repose of Roman Catholics or Protestants, would they not quickly come to the conclusion that it must be that it is all the same no matter what you believe? And by this there would be even more frequent apostasy from the Orthodox Church, if not formally, then at least in spirit. And this would be the greatest woe. The person thus led astray would not even notice that he is Orthodox in name only, while, in fact, he does not believe correctly, or even does not believe at all."

The elder adds: "Likewise, the Christians of other confessions, seeing that the Orthodox Church prays for them, must of necessity come to the same conclusion concerning the equality of all faiths. This may even dissuade from union with the Orthodox Church the heterodox who would desire this. They will say, 'After all, the Orthodox pray for us, even without this.'"

So we are taught to pray for the non-Orthodox in a manner that is not self-willed, that is, praying as we wish and in whatever manner we so desire. Our Mother the Church teaches us, that even prayer should be done "properly and according to order." While we do pray for all mankind at the Divine Services, we may also pray for the non-Orthodox particularly, if so inspired, personally and privately lifting their names to the Lord during the services.

Upcoming Events 2012-2013

July 21: Wedding of Andrew (Adam) and Juliana (Lauren), 4:00 p.m.
August 1-14 Dormition Fast

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!