

# The Confessor's Tongue for June 26, A. D. 2016

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentcost, All Saints, St. David of Thessalonica

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 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 volunteered 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."

*Orthodox Life, July—December 2010/50.*

## The Classes of Saints

The Orthodox Church honors various men and women 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, unmercenary healers, and blessed ones.

*Prophets* are those pious ones of the Old Testament who were selected by God Himself and sent by Him to various places to call people to repentance and to predict 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 men and women 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" ["holy fools for Christ"].

S. V. Bulgakov, *Handbook for Church Servers*, 2nd ed. 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0621-0624 Translated by Archpriest Eugene D Tarris © June 21, 2005. All rights reserved.

### The Sunday of All Saints

On this the first Sunday after Pentecost, we remember the Saints, God's holy ones, of all ages. The word 'saints' literally means 'holy ones', from the Greek word *hagios*, or holy. We Christians are all called to be holy as God is holy, so all of us are predestined by God and called to be saints. The Church's canonized Saints are those Christians whose lives clearly manifested a fullness of Christ's presence in them by which they have been made holy, or 'set apart' to God and purified from sin to such a degree that the Church holds them up as examples to us.

A saint is not one who lived a perfect life free from sin, but is one who faced his sins, repented, confessed, and forsook them and allowed Christ to cleanse him and live in him. We, too, are going through this process to the degree we cooperate with God, seek Him, and submit ourselves to Him daily.

A saint is not one who is necessarily an example in every way. The Martyrs are honored for their willingness to lay down their lives for the sake of Christ, as are Confessors. The Russian royal family was canonized as holy 'passion bearers' for the Christian faith and fortitude they showed in their last year as prisoners living with the constant threat of death. Ss Boris and Gleb are Russian princes who allowed themselves to be killed by murderers sent by their ambitious brother rather than to resist him and cause the people to suffer through civil war.

We are not called to emulate all the particulars of a saint's life. Some of them had some strange and even extreme practices which were needful for them, but which would not be recommended for us. For example, St. Herman of Alaska secretly wore chains under his clothes for many years. We are called to emulate his love for God and others, his life of prayer and service and missionary zeal, not his wearing of chains.

May we all embrace our vocation to be saints and pursue it diligently as we ponder the lives of the saints and are inspired thereby. *Fr. Justin*

#### Upcoming Events 2016

27-29 June Apostles' Fast  
30-31 July, 15-Year Anniversary w/ Bishop Alexander  
1-14 August Dormition Fast  
5 or 12 August Possible All-Night Vigil

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!