

The Confessor's Tongue for May 6, A. D. 2018

Fifth Sunday of Pascha: Samaritan Woman; Prophet Job

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.

Zapivka and Dipping Antidoron in the Wine

"Zapivka" is a Russian term for the sip of wine one takes after receiving Holy Communion. It is a custom prevalent in Russian parishes, but it is not a universal Orthodox practice. The purpose of taking bread and wine after Holy Communion is simple: to cleanse the mouth so that particles of the Holy Mysteries do not remain there. It is said the practice was introduced to keep people from receiving Communion but not swallowing and instead taking it home in their mouths and misusing it.

The practice of dipping bread in wine after Holy Communion is not uncommon. We introduced it here at St. Maximus for children so that they would not either drink too much wine or would not fumble and spill the wine cups.

The practice has gone far beyond its original intent. Many people, both children and adults are now taking bread, dipping it, eating it, and also sipping. This slows down the line at the Zapivka table. The dipping is also inherently messy. Moreover, some people carelessly wet their fingers in the wine.

Given the size of our parish now, the priest has decided that for the good order of the parish we will curtail the practice of dipping. Parents should make this known to the children. Communicants should approach, take a piece of bread, take a sip of wine, and move on. Parents or Godparents should help young children take an appropriate sip of wine, if they are taking one. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

On the Use of Holy Water

Besides the Blessing of Water at Theophany, water is also customarily blessed at Midfeast Pentecost, which was last Wednesday, and on the Feast of the Procession of the Holy Cross (August 1). It can also be blessed any time it is needed.

Christ through His Baptism has sanctified the nature of water. For this reason, on the Eve of the Feast of Theophany, after the blessing of the water, we take some home and keep it throughout the year, making regular use of it. The day of sanctifying the waters becomes a clear sign of God's grace, for the nature of these waters is not spoiled for a long time, but it endures for a whole year or two, or three, or many years. Today the waters that are drawn remain fresh and new and after an extended time is as on the day in which it was drawn.

By pious custom, the blessed waters of Theophany are taken home after the Great Blessing of Waters for the spiritual refreshment of soul and body and the sanctification of our dwellings. The water is drunk every day from the Feast (Jan 6) through its leavetaking (Jan 14). At other times, when we cannot come to church, or when we feel ill, are

embarking upon a journey, are especially tempted, etc., we should resort to these blessed waters, partaking of them with prayer and deep faith.

Holy Water is kept in the church throughout the year for the faithful to take home as needed.

Old Holy Water may be disposed of by pouring it out on plants. It should not be poured down the drain.

On Holy Water

If water acts as a means of grace preeminently in the Sacrament of Baptism, it is also used as a means of sanctification. That is why Orthodox Christians are encouraged to drink from the water that has been blessed and to sprinkle themselves with it; they take it to their homes and keep it there to use from time to time. In all this, they are not guilty of superstition. If they act so, it is because they are convinced that in virtue of Christ's Incarnation, of His Baptism and Transfiguration, all material things can be made holy and Spirit-bearing: the transforming and redemptive grace of the Savior, extending to all things.

Bishop Kallistos Ware

One should always have at home enough Theophany water so that it will last the whole year, and make use of it at every need: in cases of illness, leaving on a journey, whenever one is upset, students when going to examinations. They do well who daily, before eating any kind of food, drink a little Holy Water. It strengthens the powers of our soul—if it is done, of course, with prayer and reverence, and one does not merely expect from it a mechanical result.

Archbishop John of San Francisco

On the Use of Holy Bread at Home

It is a pious custom to keep some holy bread and holy water in one's icon corner—to consume, breaking the night's fast, with one's morning prayers. This bread is either *antidoron* given out to us at Liturgy or the bread of a commemoration loaf (*prosporon*) we offered at Liturgy. It is eaten before eating anything else. The following prayer may be said with the eating of it:

"O Lord my God, may Thy holy gift and Thy Holy Water be unto forgiveness of my sins, unto enlightenment of my mind, unto strengthening of my spiritual and bodily powers, unto health of my soul and body, unto vanquishing of my passions and weaknesses, by Thy boundless merciful kindness, through the prayers of Thy Most-pure Mother and all Thy Saints. Amen."

New Icons

You may notice that we have new icons of St. Ignatius and St. James Brother of the Lord as well as Martyr Grand Duchess Elizabeth and the Foremother

Rebekah. We welcome the donation of icons for the Church, but we ask that you clear any intended donation with the priest first.

On Offerings of Temple Wine & Oil

Another way of making offerings to God for the sake both of loved ones and enemies, both of the living and the departed, is offering wine or oil for use in the Church in their name.

Typically, those who make use of this custom remember loved ones on namedays, birthdays, or anniversaries, in time of blessing or in time of sickness, need, or danger. The departed may be remembered at any time, but especially at the anniversaries of their departure. For the living, we ask for God's blessing on them, particularly for their health and salvation. For the departed, we ask blessed eternal memory (that God will ever know them and not say to them, "I don't know you").

Making an offering for others is a way to intensify our prayers for them. We demonstrate the importance of our request by making a material gift to God in addition to the words of prayer we offer. Making an offering for enemies or those who have wronged us can be especially effective for overcoming our anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness towards them. It is a way of fulfilling Christ's command, "Do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."

To make an offering, take a slip for it from the candle table and fill it out. Circle whether the offering is for oil (\$5) or wine (\$10), include the name of the person to be commemorated, your name, and the occasion of the offering. The offering itself may be put in the slot of the candle table or in the basket. Gifts in kind may be brought also: regular olive oil or port wine. Please note that the number of names to be commemorated per offering should normally be limited to one person or a family. If you have questions, see Fr. Justin.

Please take a moment to pray for those for whom temple wine and oil are offered when you see their names in the bulletin, or pray for them throughout the week.

The offering of temple wine and oil has become and increasingly common practice here at St. Maximus.

Sayings of St. Poemen the Great

Abba Poemen said, "A man may seem to be silent, but if his heart is condemning others, he is babbling ceaselessly. But there may be another who talks from morning till night and yet he is truly silent; that is, he says nothing that is not profitable."

He also said, "If man remembered that it is written, 'By your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned' (Matt. 12:37), he would choose to remain silent."

He also said, "The beginning of evil is heedlessness."

A brother said to Abba Poemen, "If I see something, do you want me to tell you about it?" The old man said to him, "It is written: 'If one gives answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame' (Proverbs 18:13). If you are questioned, speak; if not, remain silent."

Abba Poemen said, "As the breath which comes out of his nostrils, so does a man need humility and the fear of God."

A Prayer to the Immaculate Virgin

St. Nektarios of Aegina, the Wonderworker

Take away from me, O Virgin, the fetters of sin, of my lusts and the other transgressions: the terrible carelessness and the overcaring, the evil curiosity and the talkativeness, the useless incontinence and the haughtiness, the negligence, the drunkenness and the lack of mercy, the bad desires, the terrible impurity, the extravagance, the darkness, the great insensitivity. Take away the tendency to say jokes, the enjoyment, the prodigality, the laughter of immorality and every evil. Give me, O maiden, chastity, give me continence, fasting, carefulness, vigilance and perfect obedience. Give me carefulness in all and acute discernment, silence, order and holy patience. Grant to me, O Lady, eagerness to work and to attain my perfection, and zeal for virtues and exercise. Keep, O most-holy One, my soul, my heart and my mind in holiness and guard it in virginity.

Upcoming Events 2018

6 May: Concert "Come, Receive the Light" Music of the Paschal Season, 7:00 p.m. St. John's, Euleus.
Fundraiser for St. Maximus building fund.
7,8 May: Vigil and Liturgy for St. John Theologian
16 May: Leavetaking of Pascha
17 May: Ascension
27 May: Pentecost
28 May: Memorial Day Picnic

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!