

The Confessor's Tongue for June 2, A. D. 2019

Sunday of the Blind Man: Sixth Sunday of Pascha

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.

The Sayings of St. Anthony the Great 27

Three Fathers used to go and visit blessed Anthony every year, and two of them used to discuss their thoughts and the salvation of their souls with him, but the third always remained silent and did not ask him anything. After a long time, Abba Anthony said to him, 'You often come here to see me, but you never ask me anything,' and the other replied, 'It is enough for me to see you, Father.'
Saying 27 *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

Commentary: Certainly the third monk was edified by hearing the questions of the others and St. Anthony's answers. Very often our spiritual questions are those that others have but are afraid to ask, and our bringing up the topic ends up edifying others who are listening. It takes humility to ask a question, for asking a sincere question reveals our ignorance which pride shirks from revealing.

Yet this is not the primary sense of this saying. According to the words of the third monk, just to see Anthony was enough for him. How can this be? We all know the expression, "You are a sight for sore eyes!" We know the effect the mere sight of one we love but have not seen for a time has on us. Perhaps even more powerful is the effect seeing a truly holy person can have on us. If you doubt the power of holiness, recall how Moses, after all his conversations with God, wanted to see His face, but God only permitted him to see a part of His glory and his 'hind parts', not His face, as that would have been too much for Moses to bear. Even that limited sight of the glory of the holy God transfigured Moses so that his face shone so much that the Hebrews were frightened and he had to veil his face for their sake.

We have little experience with human holiness and its effects on others. Just encountering a holy person, looking upon him, and sitting quietly in his presence watching and listening can affect us powerfully. Indeed the saints (the word 'saint' is the same word in Greek as 'holy'—it could be translated as 'holy one') manifest in themselves the life of God who dwells in them, and God's powerful presence in them affects those around them, so much so that this monk was content merely to see and hear the holy Anthony without speaking.

The effect of holiness in others is why Christians have venerated relics, the sanctified remains of holy men of God, which, although separated temporarily from the soul, still participate in the sanctifying uncreated energies of God. The number of healings and miracles attributed to this encounter in incalculable. It is also why Christians have frequently made pilgrimages to see holy elders.

Furthermore, when we look at the world around us, our fellow parishioners, and our families and wonder why things are so bad, the power of holiness

and God's command to "Be holy, for I am holy" makes us aware of the positive effect we can have on others by pursuing holiness. As we grow in true holiness, we make it easier for those around us likewise so to do. This can be said another way in St. Seraphim's famous words: "Acquire the Holy Spirit, and thousands around you will be saved." One reason we don't see more people come to Christ, enter His Church, and remain, one reason we don't see the world becoming a better place, is our own want of holiness. You want the members of your family to become better, instead of lecturing them on virtue become more virtuous yourself. If you wish your fellow parishioners to be more Christ-like, instead of complaining about them and being offended, become more like Christ yourself. If we wish our city, our state, even our country to be better, instead of blaming our fellow citizens and the other party, let us blame rather ourselves and seek to improve ourselves by God's grace.

To become holy, we have to put ourselves in the presence of what is holy. We live such unholy lives because we spend so much time with what is base and impure. This means above all that we attend the Liturgy and regularly prepare ourselves for the Holy Mysteries. The holy things are for the Holy—and those on the road thereto!

Music, Vigil, Prayer

St. Barsanuphius of Optina

In its aspiration for the New Jerusalem, the city of the Lord, the soul at times finds consolation in music. I the world, I loved serious music, like Beethoven and Schubert. I once went to a concert. A friend of mine met me and asked: "Where are you coming from, and why are you so happy and exultant?"

"I've been to a concert. What marvellous music! What delight it leads to soul to!"

"Well, there are even higher delights, different ones. If you would only go off in that direction, it would lead you into another realm, to the realm of the delight of prayer."

And he was not lying to me. I loved to attend church, especially the All-night Vigil in our Resurrection Cathedral. I loved the semi-darkness, the gentle twinkling light of the lampadas. It was exceptionally nice to pray there.

And here you are, going to the Vigil now; pray there. Try to pray properly; try to enter into and be immersed within yourselves. You know, in each person there exists a world of unspeakable beauty, in which are hidden many pure delights and ineffable joys. Go within yourself and they will be revealed to you. However, don't expect only delights from prayer; don't despair when you don't feel any joys. In fact, it

even happens that you stand and stand in church and its as if you don't have a heart inside you, but a chunk of wood, and an unplaneable one at that. Well, what of it? Thank the Lord for the chunk of wood. It means that this was what was needed. You see, another soul, having experienced lofty delights, might get a swelled head. A condition like "stony insensibility" humbles him down. We can't demand prayerful bliss from God. From us is demanded prayerful labor, but joys are sent by God when it's pleasing to God and to our benefit. And so, let us pray to Him and rely in everything on His holy will!

Hymn of Divine Love 3
St. Symeon the New Theologian

The monk is the one who is innocent of the world and converses continually with God alone; he sees Him and is seen by Him, loves Him and is loved by Him, and becomes light, because enlightened in an ineffable manner; glorified, he sees himself ever poorer; intimate, he is like a stranger
-O totally strange and inexpressible marvel!
Because of my infinite richness I am a needy person and imagine to have nothing, when I possess so much,
and I say: "I am thirsty," through superabundance of the waters
and "who will give me," that which I possess in abundance,
and "where will I find," the One whom I see each day.
"How will I lay hold of," the One who is within me, and beyond the world, since He is completely invisible?
-Let the one who has ears to hear, hear and understand in truth the words of the unlettered one!

Three Ingredients for Perfection

In his teaching to his monastic community, Elder Sophrony emphasized that the hypostatic principle in man develops and becomes perfected in three main ways. Firstly, by invoking the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ; secondly, through the observance of His words and commandments; and thirdly, through participation in the mystery of the Divine Eucharist. All his life, the Elder worked on this three-fold method of uniting man with God and would lead those who asked for his support onto this path. He organized the life of those who lived with him around the invocation of the Name, because he knew from experience that this name opens all the doors Heaven. He based himself on the words of the Lord, "Hitherto, have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full . . . Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Invocation of the Lord's Name with knowledge

brings joy to the heart and light and peace to the mind.

The Hypostatic Principle is that "the true calling of man is to become a true hypostasis, a true person in the image of Christ's Person, a new Adam bearing in himself the whole of humanity and presenting it before God in intercession for salvation."

Parish History in June

On June 1, 2002, we served our first Slavonic Liturgy. June 15, 2003, 32 people attended Sunday Divine Liturgy, a record. We took delivery of our altar table, built by Fr. Michael Storozuk of blessed memory, on June 17, 2009; that same month and year, St. Tikhon's octet sang and we got green vestments. We broke 100 in attendance at Liturgy for the first time on June 19, 2011 with 101, just short of ten years from our founding. The roof on our new hall was complete this month in 2012 (we started using it at Pascha in 2013). It was June 1, 2017 that we first used the service for St. Justin of Chelije in English.

June Namedays

1 Fr. Justin Frederick (St. Justin of Chelije)
4 Mary Kaufman (St. Mary of Bethany)
4 Paisely McAnear (St. Mary of Bethany)
4 Finley McAnear (St. Martha of Bethany)
4 Shylah Morris (St. Sophia Mother of Orphans)
9 Benjamin Lyda (St. Callum/Columba)
10 Olive Reynolds, Olive Betz (St. Olive of Palermo)
19 Hunter Bellan (Apostle Jude)
24 Ian Rehmet (St. John the Baptist)
29 Petra Bramlett (Apostle Peter)
29 Charles Johnson (Apostle Paul)

June Birthdays

1 Antonia Colias (1955)
3 Cathy Wells (1974)
5 Ashley Gibson (1983)
10 Onesimus Bramlett (2015)
10 Colin Stokes (2010)
15 Art Cunningham (1940)
23 Eliana Lyda (2011)
24 Pearl Jones (2011)
24 Ian Rehment (1997)
27 Nikolai Sidorenko
28 Luke McAnear (2004)
29 Jonah McAnear (2012)
29 Valor Jones (2015)

Upcoming Events 2019

5 June, 7:00 p.m.: Vigil for Ascension with Archbishop Alexander
6 June, 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy for Ascension with Archbishop Alexander, ordination of Subdeacon Anthony to the diaconate, Maximus to subdeacon.
16 June Pentecost: Liturgy & Vespers with Kneeling Prayers
21 June: Fast Free Friday Game Night at Cookout

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!