

# The Confessor's Tongue for October 18, A. D. 2020

19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; Apostle & Evangelist Luke; St. Peter of Chetinje

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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## October 18: St. Peter of Cetinje

Saint Peter was born in Njegushi, Montenegro on April 1, 1747. He was tonsured a monk and ordained to the diaconate when he was only seventeen. He accompanied his uncle Bishop Basil to Russia the following year in order to study there. His uncle died within a year after arriving in Russia, and so Peter was obliged to return to Montenegro.

The young deacon was ordained to the holy priesthood, and was later elevated to the rank of archimandrite. Saint Peter assisted Metropolitan Sava in the administration of the diocese until that hierarch died in 1781. Saint Peter seemed the logical choice to succeed him.

As Metropolitan of Montenegro, Saint Peter also became the secular leader (governor) of the Montenegrin Serbs. For the rest of his life he devoted himself to promoting peace and unity among warring tribes and clans, and to helping his flock rise above petty quarrels and animosity at a difficult time in their history.

Saint Peter also defended his nation against the onslaught of enemies. He successfully opposed Napoleon's army at Dalmatia, and took part in the first Serbian uprising against the Turks.

Although he enjoyed a certain prominence as the archpastor and governor of the Serbs, Saint Peter continued to live as a simple monk in a small cell where he lived in asceticism. He fasted, prayed, and read books in French, Italian and Russian in order to increase his knowledge of Orthodox doctrine and secular culture. While he was strict with himself, the holy bishop was merciful toward others.

Saint Peter contributed to the welfare of his country through his good works. As a bishop he promoted love and peace. As governor he never sentenced a criminal to death.

Saint Peter, the Metropolitan and governor of Cetinje and all Montenegro, fell asleep in the Lord on October 18, 1830. He was succeeded by his nephew Bishop Peter II (Njegos).

Saint Peter's holy and grace-filled relics were uncovered in 1834. They were found incorrupt and streaming with myrrh, and still rest in the monastery at Cetinje. He is honored as a powerful intercessor for his people, and for the whole Church.

## From St. Seraphim of Sarov

If we do not agree with the evil thoughts suggested by the devil, we do good.

One should not undertake ascetic labors beyond one's measure, but one should strive to make our friend—the flesh—faithful and capable of performing virtues.

One should go by the middle path: "turn not aside to the right hand nor to the left" (Prov. 4:27); and one

should render unto the spirit what is spiritual and unto the body what is bodily; for the maintenance of temporal life, one should render what is necessary, and for life in society, that which is lawfully demanded by it, in accordance with the words of Holy Scripture: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Mt 22:21).

One must condescend to the soul in its infirmities and imperfections, and bear its defects as we bear those of others; one must not, however, become lazy, but should spur oneself to do better.

Perhaps one has eaten too much, or done something similar to this which is natural to human weakness—do not be disturbed at this, and do not add injury to injury; but bestir yourself to correction, and at the same time strive to preserve peace of soul, according to the word of the Apostle: "Blessed is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Rom 14:22).

One should partake of enough food each day so that the body, strengthened, may be the friend and helper of the soul in the performance of virtue; otherwise, it may happen that, while wearing out one's body, one's soul also will grow weak.

On Fridays and Wednesdays, and especially during the four fasts, partake of food once in the day, and an angel of the Lord will join himself to you.

When your activities fall into a real order, boredom will find no place in your heart. Only those are afflicted with boredom whose affairs have no orderly arrangement.

## From St. Porphyrios of Greece (+1991)

### About Eating Too Much

I was present once when a lady called him and was asking the Elder to pray for her so that she would not eat too much. She had become fat. I was surprised by his answer.

"You have not loved Christ enough. Give your heart to Christ. Say with fervent love, 'Lord Jesus Christ,' and you will forget the food, and the gluttony will leave you."

I recorded this advice in my heart, and, when the opportunity was given, I used it. I was once overcome with hunger before the scheduled meal. I turned my thoughts to the prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, through the prayers of the Elder, have mercy on me." Without realizing it, my hunger went away until the scheduled time for the meal.

### About Vigils

You should love vigils. Vigils are very important [*He has in mind literal all-night vigils, but even our two-hour vigils are of benefit.*] Do you understand this? They are a very important thing. Heaven opens up. We speak with God.

During our vigils up there [on Mt. Athos], up until about midnight I would get a little drowsy. My eyes would get very heavy. Afterwards, my mind would open up, and I lived in prayer until the morning. When it finished, I was so motivated, that, if there was a way for it to begin again from the beginning, I would have welcomed it. In the skete, we read the canon clearly and with meaning. When

the vigils took place in the Kyriakon [main church of a monastery], we chanted it.

#### Elder, I Get Angry

One day, I told the Elder, "Elder, I get angry. Lately, I get angry very easily."

"Anger is a good thing," he said. I thought he was joking, and I interrupted him.

"A good thing?"

"Certainly. God put anger inside us. It is the nerve center of the soul. It is strength. He gives anger to us so that we can fend off our passions and the devil. This is the correct use of anger. We take this strength from the devil and give it to Christ. You give yourself to Christ with strength, with nervous energy."

#### Gladsome Light

The ancient hymn Gladsome light is a distinctive part of the Church's Vespers service (the daily evening corporate prayer of the Church).

The hymn can be difficult to understand clearly, as the first part of the sentence is convoluted in English: "O Gladsome Light of the holy Glory, of the immortal Father, heavenly, holy, blessed, O Jesus Christ..." Who is the "Gladsome Light" and to whom to the adjectives "heaven, holy, blessed" apply? In the original inflected languages, which have case endings to show which words go together, the matter is clear.

Both "Gladsome Light" and "Jesus Christ" are in the vocative case, the case of direct address, which is often rendered in English by the word "O" before words in the vocative. So we have "O Gladsome Light, Jesus Christ" as the One to whom our hymn is addressed.

The words "holy glory" go together also and modify "Gladsome Light." "Glory" is a feminine noun in the genitive case, and holy modifies it as the case endings show. The Genitive case indicates possession. So we have "O Gladsome Light of the Holy Glory..."

The words of the rest of our phrase "of the immortal Father, heavenly, holy, blessed" go together, as all of them are masculine singular genitive adjectives modifying the masculine singular genitive noun "Father". And "Father" being in the genitive, expresses whose is the "holy Glory"—it is the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father's glory.

So let's see what we have: We address the Gladsome Light, Jesus Christ. This Light that is Christ is of (or from) the "holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father." Indeed, Christ is the Light of the Word, the Radiance of the Father, or "Light of Light" as we confess in the Creed. Let us look now at the rest of the hymn.

"Having come to sunset and beholding the evening light..." Vespers is the evening prayer of the Church, appointed to be served at sunset. By the time this hymn is sung, it is dark enough that artificial illumination is required to see. Thus, this is the ancient hymn sung during the lamplighting in the Church. The spiritual significance is clear. Christ is the Light that shines in the darkness of the fallen world. As night falls signifying the fallen world without Christ, the time in which evildoers roam and when man is afraid, we look to Christ, the "evening Light."

"We hymn the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit God..." As night falls, we sing the praise of the true God in three Persons who has revealed Himself to us in Christ

"Meet it is at all times that Thou be hymned with fitting voices, O Son of God, Thou Giver of Life..." Because of who the Gladsome Light Christ is, it is proper that we sing His praises at all times. And our voices should

be befitting His glory: not all words, not all means of singing are worthy of Him, so we seek always in our worship to lift "fitting voices" in praise of Him.

"Wherefore the world doth glorify Thee." It is fitting for the creature to glorify the Creator. Indeed, all of creation honors the Creator by doing what it was created to do—except one creature, man, who has rebelled against his Maker thinking to better his lot thereby. Yet even among fallen men there are those who are learning to practice their true vocation of worship and service to the Creator of all, the true God revealed in Jesus Christ, the Gladsome Light of the immortal Father. *Fr. Justin Frederick*

#### From Epictetus

*The Stoic philosopher Epictetus (A.D. 55-135), although a pagan, has much to say that may profit us. Here is a selection:*

Exceed due measure, and the most delightful things become the least delightful.

No man is free who is not master of himself.

Let no man think that he is loved by any who loveth none.

At feasts, remembering that you are entertaining two guests, body and soul. What you give to the body, you presently lose; what you give to the soul, you keep forever.

It is a shame that one who sweetens his drink with the gifts of the bee, should embitter God's gift Reason with vice.

Freedom is the name of virtue: Slavery, of vice . . .  
None is a slave whose acts are free.

Laughter should not be much, nor frequent, nor unrestrained.

Remember that thou art an actor in a play, and of such sort as the Author chooses, whether long or short. If it be his good pleasure to assign thee the part of a beggar, a ruler, or a simple citizen, thine it is to play it fitly. For thy business is to act the part assigned thee, well: to choose it, is another's.

Banquets of the unlearned and of them that are without, avoid. But if you have occasion to take part in them, let not your attention be relaxed for a moment, lest you slip after all into evil ways. For you may rest assured that be a man ever so pure himself, he cannot escape defilement if his associates are impure.

Asked, "Who is the rich man?" Epictetus replied, "He who is content."

My brother ought not to have treated me thus.' True: but he must see to that. However he may treat me, I must deal rightly by him. This is what lies with me, what none can hinder.

If a man has frequent intercourse with others, either in the way of conversation, entertainment, or simple familiarity, he must either become like them, or change them to his own fashion. A live coal placed next a dead one will either kindle that or be quenched by it. Such being the risk, it is well to be cautious in admitting intimacies of this sort, remembering that one cannot rub shoulders with a soot-stained man without sharing the soot oneself.

#### Upcoming Events 2019

- 25 October: 4:00 p.m. Singles Gathering
- 30 October: All Saints Party, 5:30 p.m. at church
- 8 November: Parish Thanksgiving meal

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!