

The Confessor's Tongue for November 1, A. D. 2020

21st Sunday after Pentecost; Synaxis of the Holy Unmercenary Healers

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.

^{Le} *As we prepare to enter the Nativity Fast, some of the following material should be of help. First is this prayer for the Psalter, the prayer prayed at the end of the 19th kathisma. Anyone hard of heart, weak in repentance, lacking compunction, needing a broken and contrite heart would do well to use this prayer regularly. Another prayer to use, following St. Porphyrios, is the kontakion of the paralytic.*

Prayer of the 19th Kathisma

O Master, Christ God, Who hast healed my passions by Thy Passion and hast cured my wounds with Thy wounds: Grant tears of compunction unto me who have sinned greatly against Thee. Distill for my body somewhat of the perfume of Thy life-creating Body, and sweeten my soul with Thy precious Blood against the bitterness which mine adversary hath given me to drink. Lift up to Thee my mind which hath been dragged downwards, and draw it up from the abyss of perdition; for I have no repentance, I have no compunction, I have no comforting tears which raise children up to their inheritance. I have been darkened in mind amid the passions of life, and am unable to lift up mine eyes to Thee in my pain. I cannot warm myself with tears of love for Thee. Yet, O Lord and Master Jesus Christ, Treasury of good things, grant me complete repentance and a heart diligent in searching for Thee. Grant me Thy grace, and renew in me the lineaments of Thine image. I have forsaken Thee; do not forsake me. Come Thou in search of me, lead me up to Thy pasturage, and number me among the sheep of Thy chosen flock. Nurture me with them on the verdure of Thy divine Mysteries, through the supplications of Thine all-pure Mother and of all Thy saints. Amen.

Paralytic, Kontakion, Tone 3

As of old Thou didst raise up the paralytic, / O Lord God, by Thy God-like care and might, raise up my soul / which is palsied by diverse sins and transgressions / and by unseemly deeds and acts, / that saved I may also cry out: / O Compassionate Redeemer, / O Christ God, / glory to Thy dominion and might.

On Almsgiving

St. Isaac the Syrian, Homily 5

Deem him to be a man of God who by reason of much compassion has mortified himself even with regard to necessary wants; for he who gives alms to a poor man has God to take care of him. And a man who has become poor for His sake has found inexhaustible treasures.

God has no need of anything. But He is gladdened whenever He sees a man comforting His image [another person] and honoring it for His sake. When someone asks you for something you have, do not say in our heart, "I shall keep this for myself, that I may

be comforted by it, and God will supply him with his need from elsewhere"; for these are the words of the unrighteous and of those who do not know God. A righteous and kindly man does not give his honor to another, nor does he permit an occasion for charity to pass him by unused. The poor and indigent man is provided for by God (because God abandons no one); but as for you, you have shunned the honor given you by God and have estranged His grace from you by turning a beggar away. So, whenever you give, be glad and say, "Glory be unto Thee, O God, for Thou hast deemed me worthy to find a man to comfort!" But if you do not have anything to give, rejoice the more and say, offering great thanks to God, "I thank Thee, my God that Thou hast granted me this grace and honor, to go in want for Thy Name's sake, and hast deemed me worthy to taste the affliction that is set in the path of Thy commandments, with sickness and want, such as Thy saints who walked this path did also taste."

In our time of distress from the virus, from the measures taken against it, from civil strife, political unrest, and our general sinful condition inviting God's judgment, this prayer is one we would do well to pray regularly.

A Prayer for Our Country

O Master, Lord our God, the Source of life and immortality, the Author of all created things in heaven and on earth, who hast placed all times and seasons in Thy power and hast established all power and authority among men upon this earth, that it might be used to Thy glory and the well-being of Thy people, we thank Thee for the great benefits which Thou hast seen fit to pour forth on this nation in the years that are past.

We acknowledge with gratitude that Thou hast not dealt with this land according to the iniquities of the people, neither according to the wickedness which exists in the nation hast Thou given Thy blessings: but in Thine abundant mercy and infinite lovingkindness and compassion Thou hast dealt bountifully with the American nation and hast shown forth great mercy upon us all.

O our Master and Lord, we supplicate at this present time that Thou wilt continue to show mercy upon us and upon this land and its people, that Thou wilt fill our hearts abundantly with gladness and joy that we may do Thy holy will in all things.

Give to the leaders of this nation, its President and Congress, its governors and judges, its military commanders, all wisdom and guidance and direct them to discharge their duties in the manner commanded by Thee. Grant them reason and understanding, that they may judge justly and act rightly, preserving the commonwealth in harmony and peace. Kindle in their hearts the will to care for the

needy, to show kindness on the poor, to aid the homeless, to help the helpless. Grant them to be defenders of the defenseless and terrible to evildoers, gracious to those who are good and worthy to be trusted. Guide them in all things that they may govern the nation and care for its people in righteousness and truth, putting aside all deceit and corruption, that they may maintain the confidence of all people of this land, and of all others.

Grant also, O Lord, to the people of this nation the will to do good, to flee from all evil, and to practice all righteousness. Drive from their hearts the lusts of the flesh and all covetous desires. Make them to be respectful of life and sharers of Thy blessings, caring for one another in mercy and truth. Banish all evil from their hearts and all wickedness from their laws, that in every national action and individual deed, they may be servants of Thy will and performers of Thy love.

Grant also, O Master, that the members of Thy Church may be faithful witnesses of Thy truth in unity and peace, fulfilling all of Thy commandments in true worship of Thy glory. Bless the Orthodox Church in America with Thy powerful blessings and deliver Thy people from all falsehood and sin, through the guidance of the bishops and priests filled with the power of Thy Spirit.

O our most merciful Lord, the God of all bounties and the Father of all consolations, turn not Thy face from Thy people and put us not to shame in our hope, for Thou knowest our needs even before we ask, and dealest in all things according to Thy goodness.

For every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from Thee, the Father of Lights, and unto Thee we ascribe all glory, thanksgiving, and worship, together with Thine only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and Thy most holy and good and life-creating Spirit, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

On Knowing One's Weakness

St. Isaac the Syrian, From Homily 8

Blessed is the man who knows his own weakness, because this knowledge becomes to him the foundation, the root, and the beginning of all goodness. For whenever a man learns and truly perceives his own weakness, at that moment he contracts his soul on every side from the laxity that dims knowledge, and he treasures up watchfulness in himself. But no one can perceive his own infirmity if he is not allowed to be tempted a little, either by things that oppress his body, or his soul. For then, comparing his own weakness with God's help, he will straightway understand the greatness of the latter [God's help].

And again, whenever he looks over the multitude of his devisings, and his wakefulness, his abstinence, the sheltering, and the hedging about of his soul by which he hopes to find assurance for her, and yet sees that he has not obtained it, or again, if his heart has no calm because of his fear and trembling: then at

that moment let him understand, and let him know that this fear of his heart shows and reflects that he is altogether in need of some other help. For the heart testifies inwardly, and reflects the lack of something by the fear which strikes and wrestles within it. And because of this, it is confounded, since it is not able to abide in a state of surety; for God's help, he says, is the help that saves. When a man knows that he is in need of Divine help, he makes many prayers. And by as much as he multiplies them, his heart is humbled, for there is no man who will not be humbled when he is making supplication and entreaty. 'A heart that is broken and humbled, God will not despise.' Therefore, as long as the heart is not humbled, it cannot cease from wandering; for humility collects the heart.

But when a man becomes humble, at once mercy encircles him, and then his heart is aware of Divine help, because it finds a certain power and assurance moving in itself. And when a man perceives the coming of Divine help, and that it is this which aids him, then at once his heart is filled with faith, and he understands from this that prayer is the refuge of help, a source of salvation, a treasury of assurance, a haven that rescues from the tempest, a light to those who are in darkness [etc...] From this time forward, he revels in the prayer of faith, his heart glistens with clear assurances, and does not continue in its former blindness and the mere speech of the tongue. When he thus perceives these things, he will acquire prayer in his soul like some treasures. And from his great gladness, the form of prayer is turned into shouts of thanksgiving. This is the very thing pronounced by one who has defined the form proper to each of our actions: 'Prayer is joy that sends up thanksgiving.' Here he speaks of the prayer that is achieved through the knowledge of God, that is, prayer that has been sent from God. For at that moment, a man does not pray with labor and weariness (as is the rest of his prayer, which is prayed before the experiencing of this grace), and because his heart is full of joy and wonder, it continually wells up gratitude while he silently bows the knees....

From St. Ephrem the Syrian

42. Blessed the one who has become long-suffering and compassionate and not become the slave of the barbarian, I mean anger and evil wrath, for such a one will be exalted by the Lord.

53. Blessed the one who does not set his hope on man, but on the Lord, who is coming again in great glory to judge the universe with justice, for he will be like a tree planted by waters and will not fail to bear fruit.

Upcoming Events 2020

8 November: Parish Thanksgiving meal
15 November: Nativity Fast Begins
21 November: Feast of Entrance of Theotokos into the Temple

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!