

The Confessor's Tongue for July 4, A. D. 2021

Sunday of All-Saints of North America

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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Sunday of All Saints of North America

This second Sunday after Pentecost, we remember all the Saints who have blossomed in our land.

We remember St. Herman, the monk who came to Alaska as one of the original missionaries in 1794 and lived there on Spruce Island until his repose in 1837, teaching the Christian Faith to the native Alaskans. We remember St. Innocent, who first came as a married priest to Alaska in 1824, was made the first bishop of the area in 1840 after the death of his wife, and served there as a tireless missionary and translator of the Scriptures and services of the Church into the native tongues until he was called back to Moscow in 1868 to become Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia.

We remember the first martyrs of our land, St. Peter the Aleut, an Aleut lad who was tortured to death for his faith by Jesuits wanting him to convert in San Francisco in 1815, and St. Juvenaly, a Russian priest-monk and missionary who was martyred by natives near Lake Illiamna in Alaska in 1796.

We remember St. Tikhon, who served as bishop in America from 1898 to 1907 and was instrumental in seeing the services of the Church translated into English to make her worship and faith accessible to the English speakers of America, and who as Patriarch of Moscow from 1917 until his death in 1925, stood firm against the atheist Bolsheviks who sought to destroy the Church.

We remember St. Jacob Netsvetov of Alaska, the first native priest to be ordained to serve the Alaskan peoples, who labored as a missionary priest from 1828 until his repose in 1864.

We remember St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, an Eastern-rite Roman Catholic Priest (Uniate), who returned to the Orthodox Church in 1891 bringing 361 others with him, and who from then until his repose in 1909 labored tirelessly to reconcile Uniate Catholics with the Orthodox Church, himself personally bringing in about 15,000.

We remember St. Raphael, the first Arabic speaking bishop to labor in North America as an auxiliary to St. Tikhon in 1904, and, who established more than 30 Syrian and Lebanese parishes, and who founded *The Word* journal in Arabic (which continues to be published to this day, in English now) before his repose in 1915.

We remember two priests, Alexander Hotovitsky and John Kochurov who labored in America for a time and who both were martyred back in Russia by the Bolsheviks, St. John being the first of many priest-martyrs under communism in 1918; St. Alexander died in the Solovki labor camp in 1930.

Finally, we remember two beloved hierarchs, St. Nikolai of Zicha and St. John of San Francisco. St. Nikolai was a Serbian bishop, known as a second

Chrysostom for his powerful preaching and inspired writings. After suffering during the Second World War at the hands of the National Socialists in the Dachau death camp, he came to America and taught at St. Tikhon's seminary until his repose in 1956. St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco was a Russian bishop who escaped the Bolsheviks, for a time was in Serbia, and who later served the Russian emigre community in Shanghai, China with special care for orphans until Mao's communists drove them out; he brought his orphans to the United States and ended his life as Bishop in California. He is much beloved and is known as a wonderworker.

These are but the Saints known to us who labored in North America. Doubtless there are others known to God. O all ye Saints of North America, pray to Christ God for us! 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*

To try to discover the meaning of the commandments through study and reading without actually living in accordance with them is like mistaking the shadow of something for its reality. It is only by participating in the truth that you can share in the meaning of truth. If you search for the meaning without participating in the truth and without having been initiated into it, you will find only a besotted kind of wisdom (cf. 1 Cor. 1:20). You will be among those whom St Jude categorized as 'psychic' or worldly because they lack the Spirit (cf. Jude 19), boast as they may of their knowledge of the truth. *St. Gregory of Sinai, 137 Texts on Commandments and Doctrines, 22, Philokalia vol. 4*

'Crazy John', the Early Years

Crazy John lived in a tiny, humble apartment that he had inherited from his mother, one of the twenty apartments that comprised the condominium building. He worked at the neighborhood bakery and began work at daybreak. From that bakery where he worked, he would fill two bags of bread and bread rolls every day and would rush to distribute them to the elderly men, women, and students in his neighborhood. "Here you are—I thought I might give Apostoly the baker, so that you will commemorate him in your prayers," he would say. The truth was that Crazy John would use up a large part of his wages to provide bread to the poor of his neighborhood. He would tell Mr. Apostoly that he was only helping out some sick friends and that he was being paid for his trouble.

But how did he know who the poor in his neighborhood were? As a little boy, he had made it a habit to indiscriminately ring the doorbells, not only in his own condominium, but also in neighboring apartment buildings. He would introduce himself to

everyone and would ask them if they needed anything that he could help them with: "And how did you wake up this morning? Has any problem come up that I can be of assistance to you? How are your children?"

At first, some snubbed him. Others, obviously annoyed by his unexpected presence, slammed their door in his face, refusing to speak to him. But there were others who actually waited for Crazy John to come so that they could hear a kind word from him. Eventually, he came to know all of them; he came to know their peculiarities, but also the basic elements of their characters.

In the evenings, Crazy John would retire to his humble home and pray. He liked to recite the books of Psalms, claiming to someone who asked him why that "They were intended to drive away the little critters (demons) from the neighborhood." He used to read it so loudly, that a newly-arrived tenant who didn't know him well called the police, complaining about him disturbing the peace! Also, on a daily basis, the fool would cense all the apartments, beginning from the top floor and working down. He would even go out to the backyards and cense there also. And when someone was sick, he would visit him and—after censing him and making the sign of the cross over him—he would read haltingly, with his limited education, the words of the Epistle of James. "Pray for one another, that you may be healed," he would tell him. He would urge him to go to Confession and receive Communion "to get well by the greatest of doctors, our Christ."

Quite often, after coming home from the bakery, he would grab a broom and sweep the entire apartment building "to keep it clean," as he used to say.

He enjoyed intervening with a smile between those who quarreled publicly in cafes about political parties (in older times, there used to be heated arguments over political parties). "Ah, you guys," he used to tell them, "why do you count on and pin your hopes on tin cans and cymbals? Instead of quarrelling, you should be praying to God to send us a David for king. He could solve problems because his knees had bled from prolonged supplications and prayers. But what do your wise guys do? Their supplications are only for commission, and they become one with corruption. They take you for idiots, and they mock you."

"Get lost, Crazy John," they would reply, and, to avoid him altogether, they would send him off on an errand. But he would always say, "Don't pin your hopes on the rulers. Have your hopes only in God."

from *Crazy John: A Saintly Fool for Christ* vol. 1, Athens, 2010.

The Sign of the Cross at the Creed

The sign of the cross is to be made at 1) I believe in One God, the Father Almighty, 2) and in One Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, 3) and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, and 4) and the life of the age to come.

(+) I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

(+) And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light

of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; and suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; of His kingdom there shall be no end.

(+) And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the prophets.

In one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins; I look for the resurrection of the dead, (+) and the life of the age to come. Amen.

From Elder Cleopa of Romania

Do not do anything without signing yourself with the sign of the Cross! When you depart on a journey, when you begin your work, when you go to study, when you are alone, and when you are with other people, seal yourself with the Holy Cross on your forehead, your body, your chest, your heart, your lips, your eyes, your ears. All of you should be sealed with the sign of Christ's victory over hell. Then you will no longer be afraid of charms, evil spirits, or sorcery, because these are dissolved by the power of the Cross like wax before fire and like dust before the wind.

Anointing at Vigil

At the All-Night Vigil on Saturday evening, it is the practice of the Church to anoint the worshippers with oil blessed for the purpose at the Litia during Vespers. Although a Litia (blessing of five loaves, wheat, wine, and oil) is appointed for every Vigil, it is customarily omitted Saturday nights in the interest of time, though on feast days and a few Sundays when Litia is served, we anoint with the oil blessed in the service.

Our custom at St. Maximus is to anoint those present, even if Litia is not served. After the Gospel reading, the people come to venerate the Gospel, which is an icon of Christ the living Word and the account of His life and teaching. Having venerated the Gospel book, they approach the priest with hands held for a blessing, and the priest anoints them on the forehead.

We use various blessed oils. We have oil blessed on the skull of St. Andrew, from the Pantanassa Icon of the Theotokos at Vatopedi Monastery on Mt. Athos. We frequently use oil blessed on the relics of St. Herman, St. Tikhon, St. Sergius and oil blessed at Holy Archangels and St Paraskeve Monasteries among others. The priest blesses each person through the prayers of the Saint with whom the oil is associated. Those who come with faith to partake of the anointing receive a blessing in accordance with their faith and need. Non-Orthodox Christians present may also be anointed.

Upcoming Events 2021

25 July: 20-year Anniversary Celebration at St. Maximus and the Big White Barn in Decatur.

1-14 August: Dormition Fast

10 August, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. Holy Unction

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!