

The Confessor's Tongue for October 17, A. D. 2021

17th Sunday After Pentecost: Prophet Hosea, Monk-Martyr Andrew of Crete
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.

Prayer For Gift of Holy Spirit

St. Symeon New Theologian

Have mercy on me, Son of David, and open the eyes of my soul, so that I may see the light of the world, even Thee, who art God, and may become, even I, a son of the day, and so that Thou mayest not abandon me, O Good One, as unworthy and without a share in Thy Divinity. Lord, manifest Thyself to me, so that I may know that Thou hast loved me as one who have kept, Master, Thy divine commandments. O Merciful One, send the Comforter even to me, so that He may teach me the things concerning Thee; and, O God of all, declare what is Thine to me. Illumine me with the true light, O Compassionate One, so that I may see the glory which Thou hadst with Thy Father before the world was made. Abide even in me, as Thou hast said, so that I, too, may become worthy of abiding in Thee, and may then consciously enter into Thee and consciously possess Thee within myself. O Invisible One, take form in me so that, beholding Thine impossible beauty, I may be clothed, O Heavenly One, with Thine image and forget all things visible. Compassionate One, give me that glory which the Father gave Thee, so that I may, as all of Thy servants, become god by grace and be ever with Thee, now and

The Ten Commandments

All of us can stand to go deeper in confession. The following is from St. Nikodemus the Hagiorite to assist us in making better confessions.

Concerning the First Commandment

Thou shalt have no other God before Me.

The atheists, polytheists, deniers of the providence of God, and believers in automation and fate, err in this commandment, as do all magicians and fortunetellers and superstitious people, and as many as resort to them. Also the heretics, as many as do not believe in an orthodox manner in the One God in Trinity and, simply speaking, all those who hope more in man or in themselves, and in the things of the natural order, and in their acquired goods instead of God, err in this commandment.

Concerning the Second Commandment

Thou shalt make no graven image.

Those who err in this commandment are those who directly worship idols and bow down to the creation rather than the Creator, like the godless and idol-worshippers, or indirectly through the attachment they have to material goods and to the things of the world, like the covetous, concerning whom the divine Paul said: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication. . . and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col 3:5), and

concerning the gluttonous he said: "Whose God is their belly" (Phil. 3:19). Simply speaking, as many as have hypocritical rather than true piety, and all those who confine piety to external things and neglect the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy and faith (Mt. 23:23), err in this commandment.

Concerning the Third Commandment

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain.

Blasphemers err in this commandment: as many as take oaths or violate oaths or make other take oaths; as many as say in every instance: "O God!" or "God knows!" and other things like these; as many as promise to God that they will do some good work and afterwards do not fulfill their promises; false prophets and as many as ask from God improper things, according to their own will, err in this commandment

Concerning the Fourth Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

As many as do not go to Church on Sunday err in this commandment, for the Lord transferred the old Sabbath to this day, and because He is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mt. 12:8) and not subject to any authority. Sunday is also the day on which occurred His resurrection and the renewal of the whole world. Those also who do not go to Church on the Feasts of Christ or the Theotokos or other Saints in order to hear the divine words err in this commandment, or go to Church out of habit only, in order to pass time, not paying attention to the service, chatting and talking with others about their secular matters; as many as work on Feast Days or make others to work on them out of their immeasurable lust for money; as many as have concerts and dances, eating and drinking parties and fights and other similar improprieties on these days; as many as are literate and do not read sacred books on Feasts; as many shepherds and leaders of the Church do not teach the people on these days; as many as do not give from their possessions even a small amount to the collection for the poor during Feasts, concerning which the divine Paul writes (I Cor. 16).

Concerning the Fifth Commandment

Honor thy father and thy mother.

Children who do not honor their parents with the following four things err in this commandment: honor, love, obedience, and thanksgiving; just as children are to receive from their parents these six things: nurture, words of good counsel, a good example of living through works, protection from evil company, instruction in letters or in a craft from good teachers and craftsmen, and instruction through physical discipline unto correction. As many as do not honor their spiritual fathers, hierarchs, priests, teachers, and those who have become their elders

through the angelic habit, err in this commandment; slaves who do not honor their masters or servants their kings and rulers; and simply, as many as do not honor their benefactors.

Concerning the Sixth Commandment

Thou shalt not murder.

Those who physically kill someone, either by hand, or by another means, or by plotting, or through assistance and provocation; those who kill someone spiritually, like heretics, false teachers, and all those Christians who scandalize others by the evil example of their life; those who in time of plague, knowing they are infected, associate with others and then infect them; those who kill themselves; and simply, all those who are reckless, err in this commandment. To this are related both anger and envy and the other passions which are causes of murder.

Concerning the Seventh Commandment

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Those who not only commit adultery with the married wife of their neighbor, but also fornicate with the unmarried err in this commandment. For according to Canon 4 of St. Gregory of Nyssa, fornication is also considered to be adultery. Those monastics who fornicate or marry also err in this commandment, as do those who fall into spiritual adultery, that is, into heresy and dogmatic error. To this is related gluttony, carousing, licentious and erotic imagery, and as many other things that are related to adultery.

Concerning the Eighth Commandment

Thou shalt not steal.

Those who steal outright, like those who are thieves and dictators and robbers; as many as are thieves secretly, like those who steal using concealed methods; as many as are fraudulent thieves, just as are merchants and all those who long to cheat the others, selling with false scales and measures and using a myriad of other means and lies, err in this commandment. That is why the Lord called merchants thieves and robbers, saying: "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Mt. 21:13). So also are those who charge interest. Love of money is a transgression of this commandment, as are the passions and sins related to it which are born from the love of money, as we have already said.

Concerning the Ninth Commandment

Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Those who witness falsely and unjustly in order to damage or smear their brother err in this commandment, as do those who have doubts and suspicions against their brothers; those who make fun of the physical defects of the mind, or of the voice, or of the face, or of the other members of the body of their neighbor, for he is not the cause of those defects; and those judges who either on account of

partiality, or gifts, or not examining into an issue well, make an unjust judgment.

Concerning the Tenth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet.

The preceding five Commandments which teach duties towards one's neighbor, forbid man from only exterior words and acts of sin. The present Commandment also further forbids him from the interior evil of lust of the soul, that is, it forbids him from desiring any sin with his heart, insomuch as this lust of the heart is the cause and root of all exterior words and actions. All those, then, err in this Commandment who, even though they do not physically take another's belonging, nevertheless desire to possess it with their soul and heart, whatever it may be, a wife, an animal, a possession, or any other thing.

Practical Spiritual Counsel on Judging, etc.

St. Sergius of Kasimov

If you have a sinful habit of judging and condemning your neighbor, then here you are, the Great Fast has arrived, lay down a good beginning and pitch out this habit. But if out of weakness you forget, if you condemn someone, then give yourself the rule to make three prostrations that day with the prayer: "O Lord, save and have mercy on ___ (say the name of the person you judged), and by his prayers have mercy on me, a sinner." Do this always, whenever you judge someone. If you fulfill this, the Lord will see your fervor and will deliver you for good from this sinful habit. And if you don't judge anyone, then God, too, will never judge you, and so you will receive salvation.

Act exactly the same way with everything else. Has an unchaste thought visited your heart? Make three prostrations with the words, "O Lord, forgive me the prodigal," and consider yourself a prodigal. For you know the Lord considers even an unchaste glance to be an unclean action. Have you deceived someone? Go and apologize to him, admit your falsehood, and ask forgiveness. Have you taken something belonging to someone else? Go and return it to him; but if this is impossible, then give double its value to a person in need. Have you offended someone? God and make peace with him. Meanwhile, the spirit of pride will whisper, "How is this possible? It's disgraceful! what will people think of me?" Answer it: "You can't fool God; He knows and sees everything. I wasn't ashamed to sin; I won't be embarrassed to repent also. Help me, O Lord!"

And—may God have mercy—if you fall into any major sin, then bring to God special repentance, confess your sin to your spiritual father as soon as possible, ask him for the kindness of giving you a penance, and carry it out willingly, with great joy, knowing that in this lies your salvation: you have both repented and also wish to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. Without fail, begin to act in this way and pray constantly: "O Lord our God! Even thou I have done nothing good in Thy sight, grant me henceforth to make a good beginning."

Upcoming Events 2021

22 October, Friday: 6:00 Young Adult Gathering
26 October, Tuesday: 6:30 Holy Unction
31 October, Sunday: Octoberfest & All Saints Party
14 November: Parish Thanksgiving Meal

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!