

The Confessor's Tongue for September 18, A. D. 2022

14th Sunday After Pentecost; St. Eumenas, Martyr Ariadne

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 Commandments of Christ

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Matthew 7:6

The faith we hold is both "most holy" and "precious" (Jude 20, 2 Peter 1:1) and is to be treated as such. Holy things are those set aside for special, not common, use, and in this case, are things set aside or consecrated for the Lord. Pearls are precious things, for they are not so easy to find and good ones are rare, beautiful, and highly prized. Here 'pearls' suggest wisdom and knowledge of the deeper things of God that can be learned only by searching them out with labor in purity of heart and having God respond to the search by opening Himself to the seeker.

In ancient times, dogs were not household pets, but were unclean wild animals, ravenous scavengers, and a threat to man's livestock and even to man himself. Swine were unclean animals not to be eaten or even touched by Jews. To give something holy to a dog is to despise the holy thing and to give a pearl to a pig who cannot appreciate it is folly and a waste. In this command, dogs and swine refer to certain types of men, men who have not set their hearts to seek God and have not yielded themselves to Him, who live unclean lives dedicated to the pursuit of base pleasures. They are unbelievers who resist or attack the things of God.

The holy things and precious things of our faith are not to be given to fools, to mockers, to scoffers, to unclean men who are not seeking truth. If we do, they will only treat our holy things with disdain and perhaps attack us further because we have not fed their carnal desires. And even if someone sincerely seeks the Truth, there are things that cannot be profitably conveyed to him until he has had the cleansing bath of baptism, which renders clean him who formerly was unclean.

Christ's command first implies that we need to know the difference between what is holy—set aside for God—and what is for common use. A normal husband and wife do not hide their marriage from the world, but they do not talk to others of their intimate relations, for that is for them and for them alone. So it is in the Church, the household of God, the Bride of the Lamb. Some things belong to the public witness of the Faith to the world. Other things, holy things, belong to the inner life of the Church accessible only to those initiated by Baptism and practicing their faith.

Hence at the Divine Liturgy right before Communion, the priest declares "The Holy Things are for the Holy", and we declare to God in a prayer before Holy Communion that we "will not speak of Thy Mysteries to Thine enemies". This bears witness

to the holiness of Communion, which is referred to as "Holy Things". Only the faithful who are living in repentance and who have prepared themselves may partake of them.

The basic principle is this: not everything contained in our faith is for common consumption, to be talked over publicly or put in advertisements. We have to discern what a particular person needs or is ready to hear and not reveal all our spiritual riches to just anyone willing to listen—as King Hezekiah foolishly did when he revealed all the treasures of his house to the messengers from Babylon. A man who doubts that Jesus Christ is God is in no wise capable of hearing with profit details of the Eucharist, relics, the Theotokos, and the like. It is no use to argue with him about them, and it exposes the holy things of God to ridicule and misunderstanding and ourselves to avoidable unpleasantness. *Fr. Justin Frederic*

The Sayings of St. Anthony the Great 32

Abba Anthony said, "I no longer fear God, but I love Him. For love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18)
Saying 32 *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

Commentary: The Scriptures teach us that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." True knowledge of God, of His character, His power, His holiness, will naturally bring about fear in us. To fear God recognizes that we shall one day stand before Him and account for all our actions and words. Wisdom in man begins with this recognition of God and resultant fear of One who sees all, knows all, is a holy, consuming fire who presence tolerates no impurity. The wicked have no fear of God for they suppress their native knowledge of Him and refuse to let themselves think of Him, or they imagine Him to be other than He is, One who is not holy consuming fire; thus, they have no concern about judgment to restrain their evil desires and deeds.

We cannot have wisdom unless we begin with a fear of God. That fear represents the correct apprehension of reality, looks it in the face, and accepts it. "God is, and I must take that into account in all that I do," we realize. This apprehension of reality leads us to wisdom rather than folly and delusion.

We come to God first out of fear of judgment and eternity with the devil. This is normal and healthy. But over time, we realize that God promises rewards to those who serve Him, and while we still fear, we are increasingly motivated to serve Him out of desire for reward, for our long-term benefit. This is rational and right. But it should not stop there. As we become more intimately acquainted with God, we grow to love Him. We see clearly His goodness, His mercy, His love, His faithfulness, His beauty, and we delight

to serve Him and do His will. Being close to Him and basking in His glory is enough for us; it satisfies us. When we reach this state of true love for God, fear is driven away and the desire for reward pales in comparison with our desire for God Himself. St. Maximus expresses it this way: "Fear of hell causes beginners to shun evil. Desire to be rewarded with divine blessings confers on those who are advancing a readiness to practice the virtues. But the mystery of love transcends all created beings and makes the intellect blind to all that is sequent to God. Only upon those who have become blind to all that is sequent to Him does the Lord bestow wisdom, showing them what is more divine." To come to this place of loving God without craven fear is to taste of paradise while we yet live. *Chapters on Theology*, 2.9 Fr. Justin Frederick

The Classes of Saints

The Orthodox Church honors various men pleasing to God who gained various names, corresponding to their various ascetic acts of virtuous life on earth. Such names are: patriarchs, forefathers, prophets, apostles, hierarchs, holy equal to the apostles, hieromartyrs, great martyrs, venerable martyrs, martyrs, confessors, venerable ones, righteous ones, disinterested ones [unmercenary healers] and blessed ones [fools for Christ].

Prophets are great according to the pious life of the men of the Old Testament who were selected by God Himself and were sent by Him to various places for predicting the future to the people with regard to the coming of Christ, the Savior of the world, to earth and warning God's people of coming judgment if they would not repent of their wicked deeds.

Apostles are the great men of the New Testament, the people closest to Christ the Savior, His worthiest disciples and companions, who were sent by Him to various countries for the preaching of the Divine Gospel to the people. They, along with the prophets, are the foundation of the Church.

Hierarchs and *Fathers* ("our Fathers among the saints) are the Eastern Patriarchs, the pious Popes of Rome, the Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops, heirs to the Holy Apostles in the Christian Church and their great co-workers in preaching the Gospel and in their labor of true piety.

Holy Equal to the Apostles and *Enlighteners* are the men and women of royal or princely origin, but sometimes also of simple calling, who by their own preaching turned entire countries and peoples to Christ.

Hieromartyrs are Christian bishops and presbyters who died from torture for their belief in Christ.

Great martyrs are the pious men and women of various worldly ranks and positions, who courageously and with great patience thoroughly underwent various persecutions, tortures, and torments by their torturers for their holy Christian faith.

Venerable Martyrs are the pious and true ascetic men and women, included in the monastic calling, who suffered from the pagans and heterodox believers for their faith in Christ.

Martyrs are those men and women of various callings and positions, who without confusion, but sometimes even with joy, went one by one or in groups into the presence of their torturers, and there were tortured to death for their firm and unshakable confession of their faith in Christ.

Confessors and *Passion-bearers* are those great men of virtuous life of the Christian Church, courageously and fearlessly everywhere and always confessed their deep faith in Christ, who openly recognized themselves as true Christians, who endured torments and torture for this, but did not receive a martyr's death; some of them are called *branded*, because during torture special brands were put on the person.

Venerable Ones are the great, pious and Christ-loving men and women, desert-dwellers, hermits (who separated themselves from the world to the desert and there saved themselves in solitude), recluses (who voluntarily enclosed themselves in separate caves and cells for their entire life) and pillar-dwellers (who practiced asceticism under the open sky on pillars, or high towers), silent ones (who voluntarily took up the asceticism of silence), and are all inclusive in the monastic calling.

Righteous Ones are the great men and women, who were glorified for their virtuous and pious life, zealous for the fulfillment of the commandments of God and for their unbowed observance of the truths of the Gospel teaching, not shirking their family or public obligations and living in the world.

Disinterested Ones or *Unmercenary Healers* are men well pleasing to God who through their unmercenary labor for the benefit of their neighbors served the suffering and healed the sick.

Blessed Ones are the men and women of various callings and positions, who in carrying out their mortal life, both in the world and in the desert, with unusual reserve, with extreme deprivation and denial of every possible worldly good, but sometimes even with many varieties of foolishness, all this "for the sake of Christ" ["holy fools for Christ"].

S. V. Bulgakov, *Handbook for Church Servers*, 2nd ed. 1274 pp. (Kbarkov, 1900) pp 0621-0624 Translated by Archpriest Eugene D Tarris © June 21, 2005. All rights reserved. Edited.

Upcoming Events 2022

25 September, Sunday: Annual Meeting
30 September, Friday: All-Night Vigil, 9:00 p.m.
16 October, Sunday: Octoberfest, 3:00 p.m.
31 October, Monday: All Saints Party, 6:00 p.m.
13 November, Sunday: 3:00 p.m. Thanksgiving Meal

GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS!