

# The Confessor's Tongue for October 2, A. D. 2022

16<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost; Blessed Andrew, Fool-for-Christ

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.

## October 2: Blessed Andrew

Blessed Andrew, Fool-for-Christ, was a Slav and lived in the tenth century at Constantinople. From his early years, he loved God's Church and the Holy Scriptures. Once during a dream, the saint beheld a vision of two armies. In the one were men in radiant garb, in the other, black and fiercesome devils. An angel of God, who held wondrous crowns, said to Andrew, that these crowns were not adornments from the earthly world, but rather a celestial treasure, with which the Lord rewards His warriors, victorious over the dark hordes. "Proceed with this good deed," the angel said to Andrew. "Be a fool for My sake and you will receive much in the day of My Kingdom."

The saint perceived that it was the Lord Himself summoning him to this deed. From that time Andrew began to go about the streets in rags, as though his mind had become muddled. For many years the saint endured mockery and insults. With indifference he underwent beatings, hunger and thirst, cold and heat, begging alms and giving them away to the poor. For his great forbearance and humility the saint received from the Lord the gift of prophecy and wisdom, saving many from spiritual perils, and he unmasked the impiety of many.

While praying at the Blachernae church, Saint Andrew beheld the Most Holy Mother of God, holding her veil over those praying under her Protection (October 1). Blessed Andrew died in the year 936.

## The Sayings of St. Anthony the Great 34

*Abba Anthony once went to visit Abba Amoun in Mount Nitria, and when they met, Abba Amoun said, "By your prayers, the number of the brethren increases, and some of them want to build more cells where they may live in peace. How far away from here do you think we should build the cells?" Abba Anthony said, "Let us eat at the ninth hour and then let us go out for a walk in the desert and explore the country." So they went out into the desert and they walked until sunset, and then Abba Anthony said, "Let us pray and plant the cross here, so that those who wish to do so may build here. Then when those who remain there want to visit those who have come here, they can take a little food at the ninth hour and then come. If they do this, they will be able to keep in touch with each other without distraction of mind." The distance is twelve miles.*

Saying 34 Sayings of the Desert Fathers

*Commentary:* Abba Amoun in humility credits Anthony's prayers for the growth of his community rather than his own leadership. In humility, he asks Anthony's council about that matter of where to build more cells to house the brethren so a modicum of peace may be maintained. Anthony on his part, does not give his own wisdom off the top of his head. He waits until the fast of the day is concluded and broken

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at the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.) and then walks into the desert with the brethren to explore until they find the proper place at sunset. And notice how practical is the result, how it fits into the monks' way of life: the one's building the cells are far enough away from the original settlement so as to have a large measure of peace and quiet, but they are within the walking distance of an afternoon (let it not be said that these monks are lazy and out of shape! a twelve-mile walk between 3:00 p.m. and sundown...) and so will not be so remote as to be practically cut off. Thus Abba Amoun and Abba Anthony set an example of doing all things with prayer and counsel and in not relying on their own wisdom.

The custom of planting a cross on a site where a church or monastery will be built remains a living custom in the Church to this day. When we have the official groundbreaking ceremony for our new church, we, too, shall plant a cross on the spot to claim it for its holy purpose. *Fr. Justin Frederick*

## The Commandments of Christ

*"If you love Me, keep My commandments."*

*"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."*  
*John 6:27*

The one who received unprecedented wisdom from God, King Solomon, characterized the vanity of man's life thus in Ecclesiastes: "All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled" (6:7). Man's basic physical need is for food and drink, and his labor on earth is directed towards acquiring it. Historically, he expended great energy in hunting, gathering, fishing, farming, and herding to satisfy the appetite of his mouth. For nearly all of human history, except for a small number of the rich and powerful, the mass of the human race lived at a subsistence level, with supply of food uncertain from year to year.

God's original intent for man was not this. He placed man in a Paradise of Bliss where food was abundant. Man's task was to tend the garden. In response to man's rebellion and failure to repent, God cursed the ground for man's sake, that it would more readily yield thorns and weeds than food to eat. Only by hard work, "by the sweat of his brow", would man now be able to eat. The fall brought scarcity, and human economics is the description of man's attempts to overcome it.

Christ acknowledges man's historical preoccupation with having a full belly in His negative command that man not labor for the food which perishes. But how else is a man to eat, if he does not work?

We are not to understand Christ as commanding us not to work for food. Elsewhere, St. Paul says

clearly that “if a man does not work, neither shall he eat” expecting the faithful to engage in productive labor to support themselves. He writes, “Let him that stole, steal nor more; but rather let him labor, working with his own hands, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28). The Proverbs of Solomon are full of warnings against sloth. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ commands His disciples to “take no thought” for the food and drink after which the Gentiles seek. This means not to worry about it or obsess over it. Rather Christ’s follower is to seek first the kingdom and trust God to provide all the material things he needs for life: job, food, clothing, housing. Hence we understand Christ as not commanding His followers not to work, but not to make the whole point of their lives the regular acquisition of a full belly and comfort for the body. They are to labor to support themselves and to always have something to give to those in need, but not to make acquiring the “food that perishes” the consuming goal of their lives.

Christ also gives a positive command. While the Christian is not to labor for the food which perishes, he is to labor for the food that endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give. Contrary to the notions of some, the Christian life involves work—work that Christ commands! The food He gives is freely available, but work is required to secure it.

The context for the command is as follows. The day after Jesus feeds the five thousand in the wilderness by blessing and multiplying five loaves and two fish, Jesus slips away across the Sea of Galilee. The crowds, hungry for more food, work at searching for Him until they find Him. Engaging them, He tells them that they make this effort to find Him not because they saw the signs of power He has performed which point to His divinity but because He filled their mouths with food, and they want them to be filled again. Christ deliberately fed the people in the wilderness, multiplying the loaves and fishes to feed the multitude, to show that He was the same One who fed Israel in the wilderness with manna. The feeding was a sign that He was the promised one who came to give far more than bread.

Thus, Christ is not content to be used simply as a provider of physical bread. He is the Son of God incarnate. To pursue Him only for the sake of a full belly is to miss the whole point of His presence among men. He calls the people to seek from Him something more valuable than bread. It is as if He says, “Pursue Me, yes, but pursue Me for the right reason, for the truly valuable thing I have to offer you.”

It is in the context of the Old Testament manna that this command must be understood. God freely provided manna for the Israelites to eat six days a week, but they had to get up early each morning to gather it before it melted in the warming sun. Food was provided, but effort was required to secure it. Hence, Christians pray “give us this day our daily bread”, recognizing their need daily to approach the throne of grace to ask and receive not only material things

but especially heavenly bread to feed their souls, the grace of God poured out daily in their lives. God gives this grace freely to those who ask, but we must do the work of standing before Him to ask for what we need and to prepare our hearts that they may be able to receive and benefit from what the Lord gives. This latter work, the preparation of the heart, is often the greater, more difficult work.

The seasonal fasts provide times in which Christians in a more intense way fulfill this command of Christ to labor for the bread which does not perish. By increased prayer, fasting, almsgiving, spiritual reading, and works of mercy, they cultivate repentance, the confess their sins and so remove defiling clutter from their souls to make room to receive the heavenly nourishment Christ would give them. They wait upon the Lord looking for Him to renew their strength. The fast teaches them that all man’s labor is not for the belly, for man does not live by bread alone but every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. May God grant us all to labor for and receive this food which endures to everlasting life. *Fr. Justin Frederick*

### Prayer of St. Thalassios

Christ, Master of all, free us from all these destructive passions and the thoughts born of them. For Thy sake we came into being, so that we might delight in the paradise which Thou hast planted and in which Thou hast placed us. We brought our present disgrace upon ourselves, preferring destruction to the delights of blessedness. We have paid for this, for we have exchanged eternal life for death. O Master, as once Thou hast looked on us, look on us now; as Thou becamest man, save all of us. For Thou camest to save us who were lost. Do not exclude us from the company of those who are being saved. Raise up our souls and save our bodies, cleansing us from all impurity. Break the fetters of the passions that constrain us, as once Thou hast broken the ranks of the impure demons. Free us from their tyranny, so that we may worship Thee alone, the eternal light. Having risen from the dead and dancing with the angels in the blessed, eternal and indissoluble dance. Amen. *From 400 Chapters on Love, Self-control, and Life in Accordance with the Intellect, 3.91-100, Philokalia, volume 2.*

### From St. Theophan the Recluse

Prayer is the test of everything; prayer is also the source of everything; prayer is the driving force of everything; prayer is also the director of everything. If prayer is right, everything is right. For prayer will not allow anything to go wrong.

Every prayer must come from the heart, and any other prayer is no prayer at all. Prayerbook prayers, your own prayers, and very short prayers, all must issue forth from the heart to God, seen before you. And still more must this be so with the Jesus Prayer.

The principal thing is to stand with the mind in the heart before God, and to go on standing before Him unceasingly day and night, until the end of life.

You must never regard any spiritual work as firmly established, and this is especially true of prayer; but always pray as if beginning for the first time.

### Upcoming Events 2022

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!