

The Confessor's Tongue for November 19, 2023

24th Sunday after Pentecost: Prophet Obadiah

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.

21 November:

Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

We keep the feast for four days until it leavetaking November 25. We may use the Troparion of the feast before meals in place of our usual prayer and the Kontakion after meals in place of our usual giving of thanks.

Entrance of Theotokos, Troparion, tone 4

Today is the prelude of the good will of God, / of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. / The Virgin appeareth in the temple of God, / in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all. / Let us rejoice and sing to her: / Rejoice, O Fulfillment // of the Creator's dispensation.

Entrance of Theotokos, Kontakion, tone 4

The all-pure Temple of the Savior, / the precious Bridal Chamber and Virgin, / the sacred treasure of the glory of God, / is led today into the house of the Lord, / and with her she bringeth the grace of the divine Spirit. / Of her God's angels sing in praise: // "She is indeed the heavenly Tabernacle."

When the Most Holy Virgin became three years old, her parents, true to their vow to the Lord to dedicate their child to Him, solemnly led their Most-pure Daughter into the Jerusalem Temple "to be brought up in divine grace" "before the Lord." Though at that time the Most Holy Virgin, as expressed in church hymns, was yet "three years old in the body" she was already "many years in the spirit" although still "a child in the flesh, she was already perfect in soul". She looked at the temple of the Lord as at a paradisiacal dwelling of the glory of God, as at the most cultivated haven, for which Her soul thirsted more than the home of her parents, is why she entered into the temple majestically and rejoicing. The Holy Virgin was put on the first step of the temple and to the surprise of everyone, with no one supporting her, being encouraged by the spirit of love for God, climbed firmly up the fifteen steps of the temple.

At this time, on the outside in front of the Jerusalem temple there were about were ninety apartments. In these apartments there were rooms for various persons: separately the maidens who lived there during the time they were dedicated to the services to God; separately widows lived there, promising God to keep the premises clean until their death; separately men, called supervisors, in the image of unmarried monks resided there. There were also other apartments for the comfort of pilgrims and strangers who came from a distance for worship in the temple. All of them served the Lord in the temple and had their livelihood from the church estates. The Most Holy Child Mary was lodged at the Jerusalem temple in the apartments where the maidens lived.

The Holy Young Child, living in the temple, spent all her time in prayer, reading the Word of God

and thinking about God. She occupied half her time with her own needlework, especially loving to prepare clothes dedicated to serving in the temple; which she fulfilled while growing up, and occupied the other half with works of charity at the temple, serving the needy, the crippled and the infirm which tradition says, to whom she also gave all her food, herself eating only the "most glorious bread from heaven", brought to her by the angels", and "conversing with them". Living at the temple and devoting all her time to pious occupations, the Most Holy Virgin was continually used to being before the all-seeing, omniscient Lord God and His almighty will in soul and body, in mind and heart, in thought and desire, having formed in herself a living and firm faith in the word of the Lord, a fervent love for the Lord and for neighbor, an all-perfect fidelity to the will of God, the deepest humility and meekness, inscrutable patience and obedience to the word of the Lord. "

In the early years of her life she lost her parents. After their death, she all the more turned to the One God with all her soul, and with all the desires of a pure heart and singularly sought Him out for joy and consolation.

When the time has come for the Most Holy Virgin, according to the then existing custom, to leave the sacred dwelling of her pious formation and like other maidens to marry, she declared to the high priest and to the priests her vow to remain virgin and with their advice and consent, for the protection of virginity, at that time being 11 years old, was betrothed to her relative, the aged righteous Joseph, and moved from the temple into his house which was in Nazareth.

The example the Saints Joachim and Anna teaches us to fulfill pious vows. And the deeply instructive example of the upbringing of the Most Holy Virgin explains to us our duties to our children that we must as early as possible and to take them to the temple of God more often, to accustom them to the full complement of prayers at home, teaching them in the law of the Lord, particularly in their growth to properly use their time to develop in them love for their neighbor and diligence to inspire obedience in them to the church rules (Ustav), and to waken and strengthen in them the spirit of piety and the fear of God .

New Books at St. Maximus

St. Paisius of Mt. Athos

New books constantly enter the library at St. Maximus. Among the recent additions (for your benefit) are the following:

1. Volume six of the spiritual counsels of St. Paisius the Athonite *On Prayer*. Shorter than other

volumes in the series, it contains great practical help for our labor in prayer.

2. *An Athonite Gerontikon* contains forty-seven thematic chapters of sayings and stories from Athonite elders on such topics as "repentance," "thoughts," "visions," "pride," "obedience," and "last times."

3. *The Design Inference*, second edition, is hot off the press from the Discovery Institute, twenty-five years after the first edition. This book explores how we may detect intelligent causation in the created order. The library has a large collection of books published by Discovery, which aims to investigate "the life-changing possibilities of a universe brimming with information and intelligent design."

Please take advantage of our library, and be sure to return the books you borrow so others may also profit.

Book Review

Tears of Repentance: True Experiences in a Greek Taxi Cab
Athanasios Katigas
St. Nikodimos Publications, Bethlehem, PA, 2015.
242 pages.

Every honest job can be seen one of several ways. It is "just a job", a way to make a living, a necessity of life that provides the income to live the life I really want to live. It is my life, my identity; without my job, my career, I feel that I am next to nothing. However the job is seen, it ultimately is a necessity of life rooted in the curse, that man must eat by the sweat of his brow.

Necessity and identity aside, each honest line of work can also be a ministry. Some in the church limit the notion of ministry to service in defined roles in the church and exclude their job and their family life. People would be readers in Church who never read the Bible or the Prayerbook to their families at home. People think that service to God is bound up in reading, singing, serving in the altar, parish council, the diaconate, the priesthood, the monastery, or the mission field.

Tears of Repentance demonstrates that this supposition is false. Mr. Athanasios Katigas has written a book that reveals the potential for Christian ministry in any walk of life.

A taxi driver, "Thanasi" lived a sinful, hedonistic life. He robbed his passengers by rigging his meter. But when repentance and grace came to him, he began to live a drastically different life. Having experienced God's grace, he labored to bring that grace to his passengers by living according to the commandments of the Gospel and counseling his passengers to do likewise. He recounts many encounters, some dramatic, some less dramatic, but all filled with God's grace with potential to change the lives of others. *Tears of Repentance* is an inspiring, heartwarming book full of love, mercy, and God's providence and grace. Readily accessible to most readers and engaging, it conveys a vision of ministry and service to God in our homes and jobs with power

to inspire us to serve better and more fully where God has placed us.

From St. Paisios, On Prayer

- In church, Geronda, I do not always feel the inner transformation that I feel in my cell [in private prayers at home].

Look, personal prayer itself is a preparation for common prayer. From the aspect of quality perhaps common prayer is inferior to personal prayer because one cannot move about as freely in a church as he can when he is alone in his cell. From the aspect of power, however, common prayer is superior because everyone prays together, and in one person, the prayer has greater power, and in others, it has greater fervency, and so on. Therefore, during those two to three hours in which a service takes place, you must also be there, in church, in order to pray together with everyone. What did Christ say? *For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.* p. 209

- Many people, Geronda, do not consider going to church to be necessary.

- People do not grasp the deeper meaning. They cut the cord--contact with God--and are, afterwards, unable to receive help. Unfortunately, most Christians do not abide within the Mysteries, which is why a demonic influence is present.

I always tell lay people that they should go to church, so that they can be sanctified. Even if one merely thinks that by entering the temple of God that he is entering the house of God and that it is where he received divine Grace and is sanctified, it is enough to move him profoundly. In church, Christ, Panaghia, and the Saints watch us; we ask for their help; we are able simply to talk with them. In church, we are given the potential to abide in the Mysteries. It is in church that Christ sacrifices Himself for us and gives us His Body and His Blood. Should that not shake us up? 207

- Geronda, because I have difficulty in doing prostrations, I do not like them.

- When you do prostrations, have in mind that you are before God and that you are worshipping Him, and thus you will come to love doing prostrations. p. 78

- Geronda, when I am ill and in pain, I cannot concentrate on prayer.

- Prayer in that particular circumstance includes both effort and pain; it also includes asceticism, which is why such prayer is answered far more than the prayer you do when you are well. We should even love pain a little. An illness can be a great blessing for a person. When a person comprehends that, he accepts it with joy and chants with joy, *I will bless the Lord at all times.* p. 125

Upcoming Events 2023

21 November: Entrance of Theotokos into Temple
23 November: Thanksgiving Day Liturgy

GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS!