

The Confessor's Tongue for October 24, 2010

22nd Sunday After Pentecost: Martyr Arethas & Companions

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 24: Martyr Arethas et al.

They suffered in the year 523 under the Omirite King Dunaan [Dhu Nuwas]. In the persecution raised by this king against Arabian Christians, St. Arethas was a 95 year old starets [elder] and held the post of governor of Negran. For his confession of Christ he accepted death by the sword. Together with him the same crown of martyrdom was received by the majority of citizens, priests, monks, clergymen and consecrated virgins, numbering up to 4252 persons.

The Sayings of St. Anthony the Great

One day Abba Anthony received a letter from the Emperor Constantius, asking him to come to Constantinople, and he wondered whether he ought to go. So he said to Abba Paul, his disciple, "Ought I to go?" He replied, "If you go, you will be called Anthony; but if you stay here, you will be called Abba Anthony." Saying 31 *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

Commentary: Firstly, notice that even in his greatness, Anthony consults a brother and does not rely solely upon his own discernment or wisdom. And he asks not any brother, but his own disciple! Humility is required to ask counsel of others, still greater humility is required to ask one who less in age, experience, and wisdom. How many pitfalls we would avoid if we would take counsel with others! How many tears of repentance would need never be shed if only we had asked counsel and listened! We ought not to ask counsel of just anyone, of course. We can ask those who will tell us what we want to hear, but that will not help us. We must ask those who have a measure of wisdom and discernment from God.

Secondly, notice the reversal of the world's values. Most of us would leap and the opportunity if the President summoned us by name to visit him. Yet Abba Paul indicates that to go the Emperor will hinder Anthony in his true vocation of being a monk. He will be known simply as 'Anthony' if he goes to the Emperor, but if he stays in his cell in the desert, he will be known as 'Abba Anthony.' Very often the thing the world judges as great honor and opportunity is a spiritual hindrance for the true lover and seeker of God. Public exposure, honor, and publicity may well hold one back from one's full potential in Christ.

So thirdly, we see that our choices in life are not always between good and bad, but sometimes between good, better, and best. Good and better can be the enemy of best, and here that is the case. Better for Anthony to have his full development as monk and become known as 'Abba' than to partake of the honor of seeing the Emperor, with all the opportunities that might present, and fall short of his spiritual potential. For this reason, St. Paul tells us that "all things are lawful, but not all are profitable." It was lawful for Anthony to respond to the

Emperor's invitation and visit him, it was a 'good' thing, not inherently wrong, but it was not profitable for him nor the best thing for him, as he discerned through the counsel of his disciple Paul. May God grant us all the wisdom to take counsel with others and the desire to pursue His best and what is truly profitable for us, and not to be content with merely the good and lawful. *Fr. Justin Frederick*

Icon of Theotokos "Joy of All Who Sorrow"

This holy icon became glorified in 1688. Euthymia, the sister of Patriarch Joachim, living on Ordynka Street in Moscow, and suffering for a long time with a severe wound in a side, once, during a prayer to the Savior and the Mother of God, heard a voice that asked her to pray before the icon "Joy of All Who Sorrow" found in the local parish temple of the Transfiguration. When the Molieben was served before the holy icon and the patient was sprinkled with holy water, she instantly felt better and rose by herself from the bed. This miracle occurred on October 24 and in its memory the feast of the "Joy of All Who Sorrow" was established on this day. The Mother of God on this icon is represented in full stature with the eternal Child on her left hand. On both sides of the Mother of God are depicted two angels, and at her feet are depicted those praying and flowing to her for help and healing. This holy icon is found in the Temple of the Transfiguration on Ordynka Street in Moscow. Another wonderworking icon of the "Joy of All Who Sorrow" is found in the village of Ivanovo, Moscow Province. The service of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow" is printed by the Synodal printing house in a special booklet. *Note: This is a favorite icons of the Theotokos for many. I know a priest who was healed praying at one.*

Prayer: O All-Holy Lady Theotokos, more exalted than the Cherubim and more honorable than the Seraphim, O Divinely-Chosen Maiden, Joy of All Who Sorrow, grant consolation also to us, who are in sorrow: for without thee we have no other refuge or help. Thou alone art the mediatrix of our joy and as the Mother of God and the Mother of mercy, standing at the throne of the All-Holy Trinity, Thou art able to help us: for none that flee to thee departs ashamed. Therefore hear us now on the day of sorrow who fall down before thine icon and pray to thee in tears: drive away from us sorrows and grief in this temporal life, that we may not be deprived of thine omnipotent intercession and of the eternal, unending joy in the Kingdom of thy Son and our God. Amen.

Upcoming Events 2010

14 November: IOCC event at Holy Trinity, 6:00 p.m.
15 November: Pan-Orthodox Unction Service at SS.
Constantine & Helen, 7:00 p.m.
22 December, Wednesday: Metropolitan Jonah visits.

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!