

The Confessor's Tongue for May 15, A. D. 2011

Fourth Sunday of Pascha: The Paralytic; St. Pachomius the Great

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.

May 15: St. Pachomius the Great

The son of pagans from the Egyptian Thebaid, Pachomius entered military service at the age of 18. Disinterested Christian love, which was demonstrated to him and his companions by the inhabitants of one small Thebaid town, deeply touched his soul, and having recognized the true God, St. Pachomius was baptized.

After this he then devoted himself to the study of Christian asceticism under the strict ascetic Palamon and spent 10 years with him. In 325, under the inspiration of God and "wishing the angelic way of life", Ven. Pachomius left for the Tabennesis desert of Egypt. Spending his life in ascetic struggle, he extinguished "carnal passions through abstinence" and trampled down "all pernicious demonic devilry" in himself. He founded a monastery here and soon many monks gathered around him, who also founded a new monastery for themselves near him. In such a way "cenobitic monasteries were organized for the first time and Ven. Pachomius was the main leader and director. Being "a lawgiver on fasting and first leader", "a respectable director", he gave the Ustav [Typikon] in the management of monastic cenobitism to his disciples.

In the life of the venerable one it is narrated that once an evil spirit wanted to tempt him by the very holiness of his way of life. Appearing before the venerable one, the devil said: "Rejoice, Pachomius, for you have pleased me so much, that I, Christ Himself, have come to you!" Pachomius began to reason: "the coming of Christ is not like that. He brings joy, but now I am afraid; no, this is not Christ". Having protected himself with the sign of the cross, the venerable one said: "spirit of evil, depart from me". Then the phantom instantly disappeared.

Ven Pachomius died in 348 during a pestilential plague. For his holy life this venerable one was awarded gifts of clairvoyance and working wonders from the Lord.

Midfeast of Pentecost

On Wednesday of the fourth week of Pascha, we celebrate the Mid-Feast of Pentecost, i.e. half of the period from Pascha to Pentecost. This day we commemorate that event from the life of the Savior, when He on the Midfeast of the Tabernacles taught in the temple about His Own Divine ministry and the mystery of water, under which we understand the beneficial teaching of Christ and the beneficial gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Mid-feast of Holy Pentecost is referred to among the ancient Christian feasts. If its beginning cannot be seen in the canons of the Apostolic [37] and Antiochian Councils [20] concerning the assembly of local councils during the

fourth week of Pentecost, then in the time of St. John Chrysostom it is already existing and established by the Holy Church. In the fifth century Anatolius of Constantinople, in the seventh the Venerable Andrew of Crete, in the eighth St. John of Damascus, in the ninth the Venerable Theophanes the Confessor wrote church hymns for the Mid-feast, with which the Holy Church even now praises the Lord in the Mid-feast of Pentecost.

Standing between the day of Pascha and the day of Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Mid-feast serves as a bond between these two great Christian celebrations: together with the continuing celebration of the first of these the Mid-feast reminds us of the approach of the feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and also the feast of the Ascension of the Lord. "Let us glorify, brethren, - the Holy Church appeals to us, - the resurrection of Christ the Savior, and having reached the middle of the feast of the Master, let us most closely keep the commandments of God, that we may also be worthy to celebrate the Ascension, and the Coming of the Holy Spirit (*The Praises, Verse after Glory, Both now and Ever by Anatolius*)"; "Having reached the middle of the divine feasts let us who are godly wise hasten to learn the fulfillment of the divine virtues (*canon 1, Ode five, Troparion 1*)."

The Troparion, Tone 8 In the middle of the Feast, O Savior, Fill my thirsting soul with the waters of godliness, as Thou didst cry to all: If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink! O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to Thee!

Prayer Before Confession

St. Symeon the New Theologian

O God and Lord of all! Who hath the power over every breath and soul, the only One able to heal me, hearken unto the prayer of me, the wretched one, and, having put him to death, destroy the serpent nestling within me by the decent of the All-Holy and Life-Creating Spirit. And vouchsafe me, poor and naked of all virtue, to fall with tears at the feet of my spiritual father, and call his holy soul to mercy, to have mercy on me. And grant, O Lord, unto my heart humility and good thoughts, becoming a sinner, who hath consented to repent unto Thee, and do not abandon unto the end the one soul, which hath united itself unto Thee and hath confessed Thee, and instead of all the world hath chosen Thee and hath preferred Thee. For Thou knowest, O Lord, that I want to save myself, and that my evil habit is an obstacle. But all things are possible unto Thee, O Master, which are impossible for man. Amen.

On Brotherhood

Bishop Augustinos of Florina

Brotherhood! It was one of the three words which symbolized the French Revolution. Unfortunately, those beautiful symbols remained and still remain unrealized today, not because God does not want brotherhood, but because man does not want it. Man, with his selfishness, his self-interest, greed, and rapacious plans, is the great obstacle, the first enemy, who will not allow the idea of brotherhood to be realized. For this to happen, a revolution must take place, a revolution which differs from other revolutions in that it is an internal one, a revolution of the heart. If the heart will not be redeemed, cleansed of its passions, it is impossible to create and preserve a society based on the first Christian community. (*Divine Liturgy vol. 1, p. 242-3*)

On a Rule for Beginners

St. Isaac the Syrian, From Homily 17

This is the rule of life that is chaste and pleasing to God: to refrain from glancing here and there with your eyes, but always to gaze steadily on what lies before you; to refrain from speaking idly and to say only what is necessary; to regard mean attire as sufficient for your body's need and, in like manner, to make use of foods that sustain the body, and not those that satisfy gluttony; to take a little from all foods, and not disdain some and select others and choose to fill your belly with these. Discretion is greater than all the other virtues. Without companions (when not ill or infirm), do not partake of wine. Do not interrupt the words of one who is talking, and contradict him like someone uncouth; but like a wise man be patient. And wherever you find yourself, consider yourself the inferior, and the servant of your brethren. Do not expose any part of your body in front of any man; and do not touch the body of another, except for some necessary reason, nor permit anyone to touch your body without good cause, as I have said. Shun familiarity as death. Acquire a chaste rule for your sleep, lest the power that guards you remove itself far from you. Wherever you sleep, if possible, let no man see you. Do not spit in front of anyone. If a fit of coughing comes over you while seated at table, turn your face to your back, and cough in this manner. Eat and drink with moderation, as befits the children of God...

O glutton, bent on the worship of your own belly! It is better for you to cast live coal into your stomach than the fried foods of rulers and princes. Pour your mercy out on all, and be moderate in all things. Keep yourself from much talk, for it is this that extinguishes the noetic movements produced in our heart by God. Flee from discussions of dogma as from an unruly lion; and ever embark upon them yourself, either with those raised in the Church or with strangers. Do not pass through the streets of the hot-tempered and quarrelsome, lest your heart be filled with anger, and the darkness of delusion

dominate your soul. Do not dwell with a proud man, lest the energy of the Holy Spirit be taken from your soul and she become the dwelling of every evil passion. If you keep these observances, O man, and occupy yourself continuously with the study of God, in truth your soul will see the light of Christ in herself, and will never be darkened unto all eternity. To Him be glory and dominion to the ages. Amen.

A Prayer to the Immaculate Virgin

St. Nektarios of Aegina, the Wonderworker

Take away from me, O Virgin, the fetters of sin, of my lusts and the other transgressions: the terrible carelessness and the overcaring, the evil curiosity and the talkativeness, the useless incontinence and the haughtiness, the negligence, the drunkenness and the lack of mercy, the bad desires, the terrible impurity, the extravagance, the darkness, the great insensitivity. Take away the tendency to say jokes, the enjoyment, the prodigality. the laughter of immorality and every evil. Give me, O maiden, chastity, give me continence, fasting, carefulness, vigilance and perfect obedience. Give me carefulness in all and acute discernment, silence, order and holy patience. Grant to me, O Lady, eagerness to work and to attain my perfection, and zeal for virtues and exercise. Keep, O most-holy One, my soul, my heart and my mind in holiness and guard it in virginity.

May Namedays

2 Zoe Marie Frederick (Martyr Zoe)
8 Subdeacon John VanDeventer
8 Emilia (Emily) Rivas (St. Emilia)
9 Christopher Horiates (Martyr Christopher)
21 Deborah (Helen) Sancer

May Birthdays

14 Emalie Northam
17 Marsha Burkhart
19 Pamela (Xenia) Ward
24 Elisabeth Terry

Upcoming Events 2011

30 May: Memorial Day Picnic
28-31 July: Ten-Year Anniversary Celebration

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!