

The Confessor's Tongue for June 5, A. D. 2011

Seventh Sunday of Pascha: Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea

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.

Fathers of the First Council

Devoting this Sunday to the memory of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, the Holy Church sings:

"Let us, the pious assembly of true believers, celebrate today in prayerful memory the God-bearing Fathers from every part of the world who assembled in the brilliant city of the Nicaea. For these pious wise ones put down the godless teachings of the terrible Arius, and expelled him from the unity of the Catholic Church,* and clearly taught everyone to profess their faith in the consubstantial and coeternal Son of God, existing before the ages, expressing this clearly in the symbol of faith".

The heresy of Arius was one of the most destructive heresies. It concerned the teaching about the divinity of the Son of God, i.e. that main doctrine of Christianity, on which all our faith and the whole Church of Christ is founded, which makes it the unique basis for all hope of our salvation. If the Arian heresy, rejecting the divinity of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, then exasperated the whole Church and carried away with itself a great many pastors and shepherds—if this heresy had overcome the true teaching of the Church and was made dominant, then for a long time Christianity itself would no longer exist and the whole world would be plunged into its former darkness of unbelief and superstitions. The Holy Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council laid down the Orthodox teaching, having established it universally. And the Holy Church still glorifies these same Holy Fathers of Nicaea on the Sunday after the Ascension because the most glorious Ascension of the Lord serves as clear proof of the inseparable connection of the two natures in Jesus Christ, the divine and the human....

Commemorating the efforts of the Holy Fathers of the Nicaea Council, the Holy Church glorifies them because they, "gathered all pastoral art and righteous ascetic passion, avenging the difficult rotten and pernicious wolves, with the sling of the spirit casting them out from the church", "preaching peace, with the peace most of the world was united", and "all the gathered spiritual art and through the Divine Spirit immediately seeing the heavenly and honorable symbol of faith divinely written sketched out", i.e. as St. Demetrius of Rostov says, "a true canon of the Christian faith". According to the manual of this hierarch, firmly containing this canon of the Orthodox faith in Christ, as the bright candlestick in the darkness of this world, we should go the way of the commandments of the Lord, in order for us to inherit a bright and blessed place. With all our life, we should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true God and the perfect man, and He, our Savior, will call us true servants and His confessors (Mt. 10:2). With a loud voice we should

most sweetly glorify the name of Christ, before whom every heavenly, earthly, infernal worldly knee bends, but the Lord will glorify us with heavenly glory for He says: "I will glorify those who glorify me". Continuously we should hymn Him as the true God, and He will bless us in this contemporary life with the fulfillment of His grace, and for the praise of our mouths He will satisfy our flesh and souls with the glory of eternal life in His kingdom of heaven where He in unapproachable glory reigns with the Unoriginate Father, the Coeternal and Life-creating Spirit to ages of ages without end. *Bulgakov Handbook*

June 5: Venerable Dorotheus of Gaza

As a youth diligently engaged in the sciences, he mastered his study of them. When he arrived in the Palestinian Monastery of Abba Seridus, he devoted himself entirely to the asceticism of monasticism and Christian love. With the support of one of the brethren he built a hospice and ministered to the sick and pilgrims. After the death of his guide, Ven. John the Clairvoyant, Ven. Dorotheus left the monastery and founded the monastery in which he was the Hegumen and true leader in spiritual life. He died about the year 620, having left behind 25 discourses to his disciples, rather remarkable for their edification and soul-saving ideas.

*By the way, in the service of the present day we commemorate the wonderful vision of one of the Holy Fathers who attended the Council of Nicaea, St. Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria. This zealous advocate of the Orthodox faith, "seeing Christ like the Child on the holy offering table, dressed in a torn robe" asked: "who are you, O Savior, in torn clothes?" "Arius", replied the Lord. "Truly", as St. Demetrius of Rostov says, "this wolf (Arius) tore the clothes of the Lamb of God, when he denied His divinity, when the Creator of all called creation as created, when the faithful people, through the blood of Christ, were divided from the unity of faith and love, when the only begotten Son was called the servant and attendant to God the Father. But for tearing the clothes of the Lamb, the blasphemer accepted the reward for his deeds. For the Lord tore the belly of Arius, (all his innards dropped out), as a second Judas, and at the same time also tore the impious soul from the corrupt body, as an example and lesson to other heretics, blasphemers". .S. V. *Bulgakov, Manual for Church Servers*, Translation: Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © All rights reserved.

June 5: Hieromartyr Dorotheus of Tyre

St. Dorotheus served as a hierarch for more than 50 years and underwent "great troubles and misfortunes", "both wounds and illnesses". He converted many pagans to Christ. During the reign of Diocletian St. Dorotheus was a confessor, and in

reign of Julian in 362 received the crown of martyrdom at the age of 107. Many believe that the place of his death was Odessus (now Varna), in lower Mysia. *Bulgakov*

Saturday Before Pentecost

On the Saturday before Pentecost, we commemorate all departed pious Christians, with the idea that the occasion of the coming of the Holy Spirit not only consists of the economy of the salvation of man, but that the departed also participate in this salvation. Therefore, the Holy Church, sending up prayers on Pentecost for the enlivening of all the living through the Holy Spirit, petitions for the grace of the Holy Spirit also for the departed, which they were granted while they were still living, and was the source of eternal blessedness, because "all souls are enlivened through the Holy Spirit".

The Holy Church appeals to us, "Let all of us pray to Christ, today as we remember the dead of all ages": "Your servants who rest in Your courtyard, and in the bosom of Abraham, from Adam even until today who have chastely served You, fathers and our brothers, friends, together with relatives", "forefathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers, from the first and even up to the last", "every age, the old, and young babies, and children", and "the new born babies", "every rank and generation", "kings, priests, bishops, monks and novices", "husbands together with wives", "those departed at sea, or on land, or in the rivers, wells, or lakes, or in the trenches", "in the mountains, on travel", "in the deserts, or in the cities", and "any place", "in vain pursuits, cut in half by lightning, both from deathly abomination, and any wound", "dying from Divine foreboding, all mortal thunder sent down from Heaven, the cracking of the earth, the rising storms of the sea", "to be carried away by hailstones, snow and increased clouds, or killed by a brick, or covered over with earth", "unexpected death of the pious, and from every stream of fallen trees, iron, or rocks", "was food for an animal, either birds, or reptiles", "who died from poisonous bites by the enwrapping of snakes, from being trampled by horses, from strangling and hanging by the simple-hearted", "who was killed by drinking drugs, poisons, choked on bones", "those whom you have allowed, O Lord, to die from a sudden unexpected fall", "all who repose, O Lord, piously repose", "Our Savior, deliver all the faithful departed from the ever burning fire and the never ending darkness, the gnashing of teeth, and the unending torment of worms, and every torture", "Arise on the last day with glory", "grant me Your heavenly kingdom".

At St. Maximus this year, we shall keep this commemoration with a Pannikhida after Vespers on Friday evening.

Paschal Notes

The prayer "O Heavenly King" is not said at home or in church during this season until Pentecost, June 12.

From Pascha until the kneeling prayers of Vespers on Pentecost Sunday, we do not kneel or make prostrations in church in keeping with the joyful, festal character of the season.

This Wednesday of the Leavetaking of Pascha is the last day to greet each other with "Christ is Risen!" "Indeed, He is Risen!".

On Sufferings and Temptations

St. Ignaty Brianchaninov; St. Isaac of Syria

The way of God from the beginning of time and from the creation of the human race has been the way of the cross and death. How did you get your idea that everything is just the opposite? You must realize that you are outside the way of God, that you are far from Him, that you do not wish to walk in the steps of the Saints, but want to make some special way for yourself and travel by it without sufferings. The way of God is a daily cross. No one has climbed to heaven by living a life of pleasure.

The innocent and all-holy Lord...has provided suffering as the way of salvation for all His followers... At the same time, He infuses into the sufferings of His servants from His own sufferings unspeakable spiritual consolation in proof positive of the truth of salvation, and of the truth of the way of suffering which leads to salvation. The innocent and all-holy Lord spent His earthly life in sufferings; still more should the guilty suffer, fully aware that they deserve to suffer. They should rejoice that by means of brief sufferings they are delivered from eternal sufferings and join the ranks of the followers and friends of the God-man. He who refuses sufferings and does not consider that he deserves them, does not acknowledge his fall and perdition. He who has used his earthly life merely for earthly success, foolishly mistakes this briefest spell for eternity and regards eternity as non-existent—and he prepares himself for eternal misery! *From The Arena*

St. Innocent, Enlightener of the Aleuts

"...strive to possess and stir up within yourself the desire to do what the Holy Scriptures teach. If you presently lack such desires, fall down in fervent prayer before our Savior Jesus Christ and ask Him to grant you this. And once grace calls you to the way of salvation, never resist it."

Upcoming Events 2011

28-31 July: Ten-Year Anniversary Celebration

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!