

The Confessor's Tongue for July 24, A. D. 2011

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost: SS. Boris & Gleb, Great Martyr Christina

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.

July 24: SS. Boris & Gleb

Sons of the Equal to the Apostles St. Prince Vladimir, born from a Bulgarian Christian woman, both of them from youth differed in piety, for St. Boris was known for his love for liturgical chant. The holy prince especially loved them for their fidelity to the holy faith and for their gentle brotherly love for one another. Yet during his life Holy Prince Boris accepted the management of the Rostov and Gleb the Murom principedom. Both of them made every effort to spread the Christian faith to the principedoms among the persistent and rough pagans. St. Gleb was considered the primate of the Murom-Riazan country, where from the most ancient times up to now he was remembered as the first preacher of Christianity and the protector of the country.

In the year 1015, after the blessed demise of St. Vladimir, Sviatopolk, called the "devastator", seized the great principedom. Being afraid of the rivalry of the holy brothers, he decided to kill them. St. Boris at this time was with his troops by the Alta River. His troops suggested that he go to Kiev and seize the throne, but St. Boris did not want to break the sacredness of patrimonial relationships and indignantly rejected this offer. Meanwhile Sviatopolk, informing St. Boris about the death of their father, cleverly suggested that he be with him in love and promised to increase his land holdings, but at the same time sent murderers to him. During the night of July 24 the murderers came to Boris's tent and, hearing him singing psalms from the tent, decided to wait until St. Boris would go to sleep. As soon as the holy prince, doubly grieved both by the death of his father and by hearing about the scandalous intentions of his brother, ended his prayer and lay down upon his cot as the murderers rushed in and with spears pierced the holy prince and his servant George, by birth a Hungarian, who attempted to protect his lord with his own body. The holy martyr was still breathing when the murderers wrapped him in canvas and carried him to Sviatopolk, who learned that St. Boris was still alive, and sent two Varangians to pierce his heart with the sword. The body of the holy prince was secretly taken to Vyshgorod and there was buried in the Church of St. Basil.

After the murder of St. Boris, Sviatopolk sent a message calling St. Gleb, who at the time was near Smolensk, to come to visit his dangerously ill father. The young prince, who already was informed beforehand about the villainy of Sviatopolk, with tears prayed for his father and brother, when it was revealed to him that the murderers were sent by Sviatopolk. Goriasser standing at the head of these murderers, ordered his cook, by birth Torchin, to kill the holy prince. This was on Sept. 5, 1015.

In 1019, after the occupation of Kiev by Iaroslav Vladimirovich, the body of St. Gleb was found and caring for this prince, he brought it to Vyshgorod and buried it beside the body of St. Boris. Soon miracles started to be performed on the tomb of the holy princes. When the Church of St. Basil burned down, the relics of the holy princes were transferred to a Vyshgorod Church constructed in their honor.

In 1240, during the time of Batu's invasion of Kiev, it is not known where the relics of Sts. Boris and Gleb were hidden. The memory of both Holy Prince-martyrs is revered in Russia since ancient times, and witnesses to the fact that, by the way, the majority of the ancient monasteries and parish churches in various parts of Russia up to now are named in their honor. The Russian people and mainly princes saw in the Holy Prince-martyrs their intercessors and prayer books. The Chronicles are full of stories about the wonderful healings done at the relics of the Holy Princes and about the victories gained with their help. *Bulgakov handbook*.

On Holy Communion, the Purifying Treasure

Collected from St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain

"With the fear of God, faith and love draw near"

We shall prove from scriptural and patristic witnesses that it is necessary for the faithful and Orthodox Christians to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord frequently throughout our lives, so long as there is no objection from our spiritual father, and that frequent Communion produces great benefits for the soul and body; while delaying this, on the contrary, produces many harmful and destructive results.

The commentary on the eighth and ninth Apostolic Canons emphasizes: "The commands of these canons are very strict and severe, for they excommunicate those who come to the Liturgy but do not remain until the end and take Communion. And other canons of the Councils command the same: namely, that it is wholly proper and appropriate to receive Communion."

When the Christian communes, what mind could understand the gifts and graces he enjoys after the Divine Communion? How can our feeble tongue express it?

Anyone who does not commune frequently is following the opposite way, for he is not sealed with the precious Blood of the Lord, as St. Gregory the Theologian states.

And so, my brethren, if we do as our Holy Fathers direct and receive frequently, we have not only the cooperation and help of divine grace during this temporal life, we also have the assistance of the

angels of God and of Him who is the Lord of the angels.

This Blood of the Lord is salvation for our souls; with it the soul rejoices, with it, it is beautified, it is warmed; this Blood makes the mind shine more brightly than the light; it makes the soul more beautiful than gold. Those who partake of this Body stand with the angels and archangels and the powers above; with it they are adorned with royal robes and the weapons of the Spirit. Those who receive Communion receive the very King Himself.

Do you see what graces you receive if you commune frequently? Do you see how the mind becomes radiant, thoughts shine, and all the powers of the soul are purified with frequent Communion? If you love mortifying the fleshly passions, commune frequently and you will delight.

Without frequent Communion we will not be able to free ourselves from the passions nor raise ourselves to the heights of sobriety.

And if we do not partake frequently—if possible, even daily—of the precious Body and Blood of our Lord, then we will not be able to escape the devil.

Many invent all kinds of virtues and think that just by doing these without frequent Communion, they will be saved—which is utterly impossible, since they do not wish to obey God's will and commune frequently and to follow the Church's standard for every festal Liturgy.

To be loved by Christ through frequent Communion of the holy Body and Blood, makes it impossible [for us] not to love everyone.

How can you love other good things, O Christian, and not frequently receive Communion? Would you like to enjoy each day? Would you like to have Pascha and rejoice with ineffable joy at the end of life? Then run frequently to the Mystery and receive it with proper preparation, so that you may rejoice.

It is the will of God that all of us who are Christians should receive His Body and Blood frequently, so that by means of frequent Communion in this present life, we shall be safeguarded from the snares and schemes of the devil" and when our souls depart in the hour of death, they may fly like freed doves and without any hindrance from the aerial spirits.

O the grandeur of the glory those Christians receive from frequent Communion, both in the present life and in that to come!

If it is necessary to confess and do penance in order to receive forgiveness of sins, Holy Communion is just as necessary for the remission of sins; as with a festering wound: first one removes worms, then cuts away putrid tissue, and last of all, applies ointment that it may heal; if you do this, you are restored to your former condition. Thus if you sin: with confession you remove the worms, and with penance you cut away what is putrid, and follow this with Holy Communion which becomes the ointment, and you are healed. For if he is not given Holy

Communion, the wretched sinner will return to his former state and, in the end, will become someone who is worse than before (Matthew 12:45).

I am astonished and amazed how contemporary Christians can celebrate Sundays and other feasts of the year with true spiritual joy, and yet not partake frequently of the Holy Communion, which is the rationale and purpose of each of the feasts and festivals. It is most certain that those who do not commune frequently, fall short, alas, of all the celestial and divine good things; and beside this, they violate the commandments of the Lord and the authoritative decisions of the apostles and the Councils and of all the saints. They are under the penalty of excommunication according to the holy apostles and the Council of Antioch. Such people give aid and opportunity to the devil through avoiding Communion, casting themselves into various sins and many other temptations.

O my brethren, let us see just once with the soul's noetic eyes of what heights and of what great, good things we fall short when we do not commune frequently; then indeed we will want to make ready all our faculties and commune in this manner, even daily. And if we have shown great negligence towards the Holy Communion until now, then let us from now on, I beg you with brotherly-love let us awake from the deep sleep of indolence, and let put forth eagerness and diligence.

The Church Porch 39-41

George Herbert

Laugh not too much: the witty man laughs least:
For wit is news only to ignorance.

Less at thine own things laugh; less in the jest
Thy person share, and the conceit advance.

Make not thy sport, abuses: for the fly
That feeds on dung, is coloured thereby.

Pick out of mirth, like stones out of thy ground,
Profaneness, filthiness, abusiveness.

These are the scum, with which coarse wits abound:
The fine may spare these well, yet not go less.

All things are big with jest: nothing that's plain,
But may be witty, if thou hast the rein.

Wit's an unruly engine, wildly striking
Sometimes a friend, sometimes the engineer.
Hast thou the knack? pamper it not with liking:
But, if thou want it, buy it not too dear.

Many, affecting wit beyond their power,
Have got to be a dear fool for an hour.

Upcoming Events 2011

29 July, 8:00 p.m. Chantus Maximus Concert.

29-31 July: Ten-Year Anniversary Celebration with
Metropolitan Jonah, Archbishop Dmitri, and
Bishop Nikon. Tickets on sale now.

16 August-15 September: Fr. Justin vacation

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!