

# The Confessor's Tongue for September 18, A. D. 2011

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost: Postfeast of Cross, St. Eumenes

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.

## September 18: St. Eumenes of Gortyna, Crete

From his youth he was distinguished by his piety, "having loved humility", conquering "the subtlety of the flesh by much fasting" and fervently responding to all the misfortunes of his neighbors. Because of his strict and virtuous life, he was elevated to be the Bishop of Gortyna on the Island of Crete and was granted the gift of wonderworking by the Lord. For his opposition to monotheletism and the intrigues of the heretics, St. Eumenes was exiled to imprisonment in the Thebaid, where he died in the Seventh Century. In the words of the Holy Church, Eumenes, "adorning himself with honorable teaching", conquered "the darkness of heresy", "shining with the splendors of wonders" "not being steeped in sin", and, "having completed the good course", reached, as "the converser with holy angels", the abode, "where the council of venerable ones are glad". He reposed in the year 680.

### From A Homily on Matthew 22:1-14

*St. John Chrysostom*

Reverence the love of Him who called you, and let no one continue to have filthy garments, but let each of you busy himself about the clothing of your soul.

Hear, ye women: hear, ye men; we need not these garments that are bespangled with gold, that adorn our outward parts, but those others, that adorn the inward. Whilst we have these former, it is difficult to put on those latter. It is not possible at the same time to deck both soul and body. It is not possible at the same time to serve mammon and to obey Christ as we ought.

Let us put off us therefore this grievous tyranny. For neither if any one were to adorn thy house by hanging it with golden curtains, and were to make thee sit there in rags, naked, wouldest thou endure it with meekness. But lo, no thou doest this to thyself, decking the house of thy soul, I mean the body, with curtain beyond number, but leaving the soul itself to sit in rags. Knowest thou not that the king ought to be adorned more than the city? So therefore while for the city hangings are prepared of linen, for the king there is a purple robe and a diadem. Even so do thou wrap the body with a much meaner dress, but the mind to thou clothe in purple, and put a crown on it, and set it on a high and conspicuous chariot. For now thou art doing the opposite, decking the city in various ways, but suffering the king, the mind, to be dragged bound after the brute passions.

Rememberest thou not, that thou art bidden to a marriage, and to God's marriage? Considerest thou not how the soul that is bidden ought to enter into

those chambers, clad, and decked with fringes of gold.

### The Church Porch 55-61

*George Herbert*

Be useful where thou livest, that they may  
Both want, and wish thy pleasing presence still.  
Kindness, good parts, great places are the way  
To compass this. Find out men's wants and will,  
And meet them there. All worldly joys go less  
To the one joy of doing kindnesses.

Pitch thy behaviour low, thy projects high;  
So shalt thou humble and magnanimous be:  
Sink not in spirit: who aimeth at the sky,  
Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.  
A grain of glory mixed with humbleness  
Cures both a fever and lethargicness.

Let thy mind still be bend, still plotting, where,  
And when, and how the business may be done.  
Slackness breeds worms; but the sure traveller,  
Though he alight sometimes, still goeth on.  
Active and stirring spirits live alone.  
Write on the others, Here lies such a one.

Slight not the smallest loss, whether it be  
In love or honour; take account of all;  
Shine like the sun in every corner: see  
Whether thy stock of credit swell or fall.  
Who say, I care not, those I give for lost;  
And to instruct them, 'twill not quit the cost.

Scorn no man's love, though of a mean degree;  
(Love is a present for a mighty king)/  
Much less make anyone thy enemy.  
As guns destroy, so may a little sling.  
The cunning workman never doth refuse  
The meanest too, that he may chance to use.

All foreign wisdom doth amount to this,  
To take all that is given; whether wealth,  
Or love, or language; nothing comes amiss:  
A good digestion turneth all to health:  
And then as far as fair behaviour may,  
Strike of all scores; none are so clear as they.

Keep all thy native good, and naturalise  
All foreign of that name; but scorn their ill:  
Embrace their activeness, not vanities.  
Who follows all things, forfeiteth his will.  
If thou observest strangers in each fit,  
In time they'll run thee of all thy wit.

### The Power in Guarding the Tongue

When Abba Macarius was praying in his cell on one occasion, he heard a voice from God, which said, "Macarius, thou hast not yet attained to the state of excellence of two women who are in such and such a city." The old man rose up in the morning, and took in his hand a palm stick, and he began to set out on the road to that city. Now, therefore, when he had arrived at the city, and learned the place of the abode of the two women, he knocked at the door, and there went forth one of the women and brought him into the house.

And when he had been sitting down for a little, the other woman came in, and he called them to him, and they came nigh and sat down before him. Then the old man said to them, "On your account I have made this long journey, and have performed all this labor, and with great difficulty have come from the desert; tell me, then, what are thy works?"

And they said unto him, "Believe us, O father; neither of us hath ever been absent from, or kept herself from her husband's couch up to this day; what work, then, wouldst thou see in us?"

Then the old man made apologies to them and entreated them to reveal to him and to show him their spiritual labor, and therefore they said unto him, "According to worldly considerations we are strangers one to the other, for we are not kinsfolk, but it fell out that the two of us married two men who are brethren. And behold, up to this present we have lived in this house for twelve years, and we have never wanted to quarrel with each other, and neither of us hath spoken one abominable word of abuse to her companion. Now we made up our minds together to leave our husbands and to join the army of virgins, but, although we entreated our husbands earnestly to allow us to do so, they would not undertake to send us away. And as we were unable to do that which we wished, we made a promise between ourselves and God that, until death, no worldly word should go forth from our mouths."

Now when Macarius heard this, he said, "Truly, virginity by itself is nothing, nor marriage, nor life as a monk, nor life in the world; for God seeketh the love of a man, and giveth the Spirit unto him."

### God is Our Ally in the Struggle

St. Symeon the New Theologian

When God endowed us with free will, giving commandments to teach us instead how we must oppose our adversaries, He left it to the free choice of each either to oppose and vanquish the enemy, or to relax and be miserably defeated by him. Nor does He leave us entirely to ourselves—for He knows the weakness of human nature—but rather is present Himself with us and, indeed, allies Himself with those who choose to struggle, and mysteriously imbues us with strength, and Himself, not we, accomplishes the victory over the adversary....

God,...who is mighty and invincible, becomes, as we just said, an ally of those who willingly choose to do battle with the enemy, and he establishes them as victors over the cunning of the devil. He does not, however, compel to this war any who do not so choose, in order that He not destroy the power of choice which is proper to our reasoning nature, made according to His own image, and bring us down to the level of unreasoning brutes.

### On Archbishop Dmitri's Vision for the Diocese

The Diocese of the South began in 1979 with only twelve parishes and missions. That number has grown to nearly 70. and Archbishop Dmitri desired that number to reach one hundred before his repose. While that desire was not realized in his life, that task remains for us to achieve.

Orthodoxy is the fullness of the Christian Faith. It is maximalistic. It says, "What must I do, how must I live in order to enter fully into the blessings Christ has made available to us" rather than "what is the minimum required of me to get into heaven."

To become an Orthodox Christian requires humility and a long process of learning and practicing what we learn. Indeed, it takes our whole lives to become fully Orthodox—fully conformed to the image of Christ. Because the instruction and conversion of those desiring entrance into the Church takes time, we cannot use clever gimmicks to promote numerical growth. Only prayer, our own authentic Christian lives full of faith and love, and the proclamation of the Gospel are our means of building up the Church. Each of us must pray and live the Gospel, and as others seeking the Truth that is Christ see our authentic lives in Christ, they will be drawn to His Church.

There is no easy path to reaching a hundred parishes in the Diocese (at which point it would certainly be divided into two dioceses; at some point, Texas alone should be a diocese) ten (or more!) parishes in Denton County, parishes in every county of North Texas and in every major city of the state. But by God's grace and our faithfulness to our calling as Christians, this and more is attainable.

*Fr. Justin Frederick (originally written in 2006, updated)*

### Upcoming Events 2011

25 September: Annual Meeting, 11:30.

30 September – 1 October: All-Night Vigil for the Feast of the Protection of the Theotokos.

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!