

The Confessor's Tongue for January 29, A. D. 2012

Thirty-Third Sunday After Pentecost: St. Ignatius, New Martyrs of Russia

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.

January 29: St. Ignatius the God-bearer

On this day we celebrate the translation of the relics of St. Ignatius from Rome, where he was martyred, to Antioch, where he had been bishop.

Ignatius was named the "God-bearer" because he always carried the name of the living God in his heart and on his lips. Also, according to tradition, he was thus named because he was held in the arms of God incarnate, Jesus Christ. On a day when the Lord was teaching His disciples humility, He took a child and set it among them, saying: 'Whoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.' This child was Ignatius. He was later a disciple of St. John the Theologian, together with Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna. As bishop in Antioch, he governed the Church of God as a good shepherd, and was the first to introduce antiphonal singing into the Church, in which two choirs alternate. This way of singing was revealed to St. Ignatius from among the angels in heaven. When the Emperor Trajan passed through Antioch on his way to battle with the Persians, he heard about Ignatius, summoned him, and urged him to offer sacrifice to idols, so that he could be made a senator. The Emperor's urgings and threats being in vain, holy Ignatius was put in irons and sent to Rome, escorted by ten bestial soldiers, to be thrown to the wild beasts. Ignatius rejoiced to be suffering for his Lord, and prayed to God that the wild beasts should be the tomb for his body, and that none should hinder his death by legal appeals. On his way, he wrote letters to seven churches and to Polycarp giving instruction and encouragement. These letters exist to this day. After a long and difficult journey, Ignatius reached Rome, where he was thrown to the lions in the circus. They tore him to pieces and devoured him, leaving only a few of the larger bones and his heart. Then his companions collected his bare bones, took them to Antioch, and buried them. When the Persians occupied Antioch in the sixth century, the relics of St. Ignatius were again taken to Rome. This glorious lover of the Lord Christ suffered in the year 106 in Rome, during the reign of the Emperor Trajan. His main feast is Dec. 20.

The tree is made manifest by its fruit; so those that profess themselves to be Christians shall be recognized by their conduct. *St. Ignatius*

From St. Ignatius

For when ye are desirous to do well, God is also ready to assist you.

Take heed, then, often to come together to give thanks to God, and show forth His praise. For when

ye assemble frequently in the same place, the powers of Satan are destroyed, and the destruction at which he aims is prevented by the unity of your faith.

Let your assembling together be of frequent occurrence: seek after all by name.

None of these things is hid from you, if ye perfectly possess that faith and love towards Christ Jesus which are the beginning and the end of life. For the beginning is faith, and the end is love. Now these two, being inseparably connected together, are of God, while all other things which are requisite for a holy life follow after them.

February 2: Meeting of Christ in the Temple

The Nativity cycle of feast days concludes with the Great Feast of the Meeting of Christ in the Temple on February 2nd, the fortieth day after the Nativity of our Lord. This feast is closely connected with the Nativity, for just as Christ's divinity was revealed at His Nativity and His Baptism, so it is also manifested at His meeting in the temple with Simeon and Anna.

According to the Law of Moses, all Hebrew parents were to bring their first-born son and a sacrifice in thanksgiving on the fortieth day after birth to the temple to be consecrated to God. The law was established in remembrance of the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt—freedom from slavery, when the first-born Hebrews were spared from death.

In fulfillment of this law, the Theotokos with Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem, and for their sacrifice brought two doves—the sacrifice of a poor family. At that time, the Elder Simeon by the Holy Spirit recognized the infant Jesus as the Christ, the anointed one of God, as did the Prophetess Anna. Thus these two joined the company of shepherds and magi as being among the first to recognize Him for who He was.

The spirit of the festal service is the same as that of the Nativity and Theophany: to glorify the manifestation of God on earth, to extol Christ's divinity, and to give honor to the most pure Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. St. Cyril of Alexandria speaks beautifully of the profound content and significance of this feast in his sermon for the day:

The Eternal, is both a small Child and the 'Ancient of Days' (i.e. God). A child at the breast and, at the same time, the Creator of ages. I behold a Child and recognize God. The Child is nourished, and, at the same time, he gives life and joy to the world. The Child is in swaddling clothes, and, at the same time, he delivers me from the bonds of sin... This Child—the angels glorify him, the archangels bow before him. The Principalities tremble in his presence, the Powers praise him, the Cherubim minister to him, the Seraphim bless him, fountains and seas yield to him... This Child conquered death, over-

came the devil, abolished Adam's curse, ...washed away all sins, condemned all heresy, adorned all creation, saved Adam, renewed Eve, summoned all the nations, and sanctified the universe...Therefore, let us brighten this day with candles, as befits the children of light, and let us bring to Christ the Light of spiritual illumination.
(Prologue 1)

The Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord has a post-feast until February 9th. During the festal time, the troparion and kontakion of the feast are said along with our daily prayers and at meals.

Troparion, tone 1

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos full of grace, / for from thee hath shone forth the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, / who doth illumine those in darkness. / Be glad also, thou righteous elder, / for thou hast received in thine arms the Deliverer of our souls, // who bestoweth upon us Resurrection.

Kontakion, tone 1

Thou who hast sanctified by Thy birth a virgin womb / and fittingly blessed the hands of Simeon, / Thou art come, O Christ our God, and on this day hast saved us. / Give peace to thy commonwealth in time of battle / and strengthen the Orthodox people whom Thou hast loved, // O Thou who alone lovest mankind.

Eastern Orthodox Church Guidelines of Attire and Conduct for Laity and Visitors

The following guidelines, which have been posted on the door to the church, are presented here as a reminder. Following these guidelines makes it much easier for all to worship with their attention fixed on the Lord rather than being distracted by dress and behavior inappropriate for the House of the Lord.

You are cordially welcomed to our church! This is an Orthodox Christian house of worship and prayer. You are invited to attend our services and celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Out of respect for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, His Mother, and His Holy Church, for those who worship here, for the Holy Tradition and ancient customs of the Orthodox Christian Faith, and for one's own self-respect: suitable and modest attire, deportment, and behavior are earnestly requested of all guests and members. We enter the church to worship, not to draw attention to ourselves by our dress or lack thereof. We distract others from worship and may cause them to stumble when our dress and behavior are not appropriate for the Lord's House.

1. This means, minimally: short pants are not allowed anywhere in the church for men or women above 12 years of age. Women's skirts should cover the knees; no sleeveless shirts/ blouses or halters; no bare midriffs. Men should wear long trousers. No beach, sports, or athletic gear or attire.

2. No t-shirts with slogans, logos, pictures, or mottoes; no tank tops. Shirts and blouses should be modestly buttoned or have modest necklines. Men, please remove caps or other head-coverings. Women may cover their heads.

3. Please turn off cell phones before entering.
4. Smoking is not allowed anywhere inside, nor is it permitted on the steps or front porch.

5. Food and drink are not to be brought into the church during services. Because of our shortage of space, food may be brought into the church during coffee hour or at other times approved by the priest.

6. If wearing it, women should blot their lipstick before receiving Communion and reverencing icons, the cross, or the chalice.

7. The worship service is for talking to God, not to one another. Please save all unnecessary speech for after the service.

8. When the Royal Doors to the Altar are open, you should stand up (if not already standing) facing the Altar (we never stand in church with our backs to the Altar), hands at your sides, or holding one over the other in front at the waist. Do not stand or sit with hands in pockets; do not fold your arms behind you or across your chest. If you must sit down, do not cross your legs or slouch. During the sermon, our bishop requests that adults not sit on the floor.

When the Chalice is brought out for Holy Communion, you bow (to the waist on Sundays and Great Feasts of the Lord; to the ground on other days or feasts) and remain standing. The bread and wine on the small side table are only for those who have received Communion, unless a communicant brings you some bread. All may receive the *antidoron* bread distributed at the end of the service.

9. The candles are dedicated offerings made by the faithful; they are not to be disturbed or removed. Please do not disturb the oil lamps. Mature teens or adults may blow out candles that have burned to within an inch of the holder to facilitate cleaning.

10. No one should be going in and out during the Divine Liturgy without a dire reason (except parents dealing with small children). If you must leave, please exit quietly & discreetly so as not to distract fellow worshippers.

11. Set an example for the children by paying attention yourself. Don't make faces at the children or interact unnecessarily with them and so teach them that not paying attention and playing in church is acceptable.

12. The reception of Holy Communion is reserved for those who are baptized members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting, participation in the divine services, and a recent Confession to an Orthodox Priest.

"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Upcoming Events 2011-2012

2 February: Meeting of the Lord in the Temple
26 February: Forgiveness Sunday (all parishioners are expected to attend) Great Lent Begins.

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!