



Fire & Light

St. Symeon Orthodox Church

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✠ **September 6, 2015** ✠

**Commemoration of the Miracle of the
Holy Archangel Michael at Colossae (4th C)**

New Hieromartyr St. Maksym Sandowicz of Poland (+ 1914)



✠ **Tues. September 8, 6:00am ~ Divine Liturgy – Nativity of the Theotokos**

➤ **Next Feastday: Monday, September 14 – Elevation of the Precious Cross (10:00am Liturgy)**

➤ *Visit the new St. Symeon's Website (same links) thanks to the work of Phillip Ritchey!*

✠ All evil begins from the mind, when it revolves solely around science and is completely alienated from God. That is why these people do not find their inner peace and balance. If, however, their mind were revolving around God, they would use science for the cultivation of their inner universe and the world's benefit, for then the mind would be sanctified.

– **St. Paisios the Athonite (+1994)**

New Hieromartyr St. Maksym Sandowicz of Poland (+September 6, 1914)

The Hieromartyr, Father Maksym Sandowicz, is for thousands of Lemko Rusyns who are mostly scattered throughout the world, a symbol of their tragic destiny and an example of their unshakable devotion to the Faith of the Fathers. Father Maksym appears also as their guide in their desire for spiritual unity. Notwithstanding the fact that many years have passed since that ever-memorable day of September 6, 1914, when Father Maksym was cruelly murdered in Gorlice, his veneration has grown and has united many Orthodox believers in Poland and abroad, regardless of the national background of the people.

For many Greek Catholics, Father Maksym was and is spiritually dear to them, because in reality their religious ties were always closer to Holy Orthodoxy than to Roman Catholicism. This came about because although formally they were under the Church of Rome, the roots of their Faith and the early tradition of their fathers was foremost in their hearts. The attacks throughout all ages and from all directions — which caused spiritual heaviness on the hearts, souls, and minds of the Lemkos, was the Latinization of their tradition, and the process of converting them to become Ukrainians, while ignoring the fact that they were of a different nation, having their own tradition.

Father Maksym Sandowicz was a great son of the mountain lands known as Lemkovschina, which is situated on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains. This area extends like a narrow chain from the Popradu River on the west to the San and Oozh Rivers. The mountains, which are thinly covered with many forests and many clear lakes and rivers, make this land especially beautiful.

{over}

At the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century when Father Maksym Sandowicz lived and labored, Lemkovschina was a part of Galicia, which was a part of the Austro-Hungary monarchy. More than six hundred thousand Rusyns lived there and their spoken language was very close to Old Slavonic. The Christian Faith was accepted by the Lemkos from the great Enlighteners of the Slavs, Saints Cyril and Methodius of Moravia, in the latter half of the ninth century. The Byzantine Faith, which was also known as the Russian Faith, was preserved by them unchanged for a period of one thousand years. It was the political aspect of the Union of Brest (a false union with Rome by certain apostate bishops) and not the religious desire of the people that removed the Church in the lands of the Lemkos from the Orthodox See of Constantinople and placed it under the domination of Roman Catholicism. This was the beginning of the spiritual unrest within the souls and minds of the Rusyn Lemkos. An especially difficult period began in Galicia in the eighteenth century when the Latinization of the Eastern Rite began. This act of Latinization brought about the rebirth of the consciousness of Holy Orthodoxy, and of their desire to return to the source of their Orthodox Faith. The Hieromartyr Father Maksym Sandowicz, appeared as a symbol of their aspiration.

Father Maksym Sandowicz was born on January 31/19, 1886, in Zdenia, near the county of Gorlice. The father of Father Maksym (Timothy) had a large prosperous farm and also was a church chanter. His mother Christina, was a humble village woman. After completing a four-year course in Gorlice, Father Maksym was sent by his father to high school in Yaslo, and later to Novy Sanch, where he lived in a Russian dormitory called Meskego that was supported by the Lemkos. After completing a four-year high school course, he entered into a monastery of the Basilian Fathers in Hrekove. During his youth, Maksym enjoyed fasting and contemplation, and because of this he quickly came to the conclusion that this particular monastery was not for him. He then entered the Orthodox Monastery of Pochaev in 1904, which was widely known for the ascetical life of the monks. The rigor and atmosphere of the monastic life at the monastery was very suitable for him. He distinguished himself from the others because of his great love for God, and became an example to others and gained the admiration of the Elders of the monastery.

On one of his visits to the monastery, Bishop Anthony Khrapovitsky of Volyn selected Maksym, because of his outstanding conduct, to enter the theological seminary in Zhitomir, where he studied for six years. Upon completing his seminary studies and getting married to Pelagia Ivanova Hzijhoruk, Maksym accepted ordination to holy priesthood on November 17, 1911, by the laying on of hands of Bishop Anthony of Volyn.

The priestly labors of Father Maksym began in the village of Grabh where on December 2, 1911, he served his first Orthodox Divine Liturgy. From that moment was the beginning of his persecution and suppression by the Roman Catholics. For the first Divine Liturgy that he celebrate, he was disciplined by the Starosta (warden) of the Yashaleskego region and was fined four hundred korun and placed under arrest for eight days. This action did not discourage him. He continued his pastoral mission, visiting the cities of Grabh, Vishovatka, and Dluge, even though each time he was arrested and also fined. The same form of terror and discrimination was used against the faithful that participated in the divine services or made their homes available for prayer services. The acts of terror of the Austrian Catholic authorities against Father Maksym increased with each passing day. At the end, when they saw he continued to remain unshakable in his mission, they arrested him in March, 1912, and imprisoned him in the city of Lvov. During this time, they also arrested three others: Priest Ignatius Gudema, student Basil Koldra, and journalist Simeon Bendashuk. All of them were condemned as spies for Russia.

Following his arrest, Father Maksym was treated very badly and the prison officials refused to respect his priesthood. His priestly cross was torn from his neck, his priestly service book confiscated, and his priestly cassock removed. In such a manner they deprived him of the possibility of celebrating divine services. In addition, they placed him in a prison cell with regular prisoners, making a mockery of his Orthodox priesthood. In accordance with prison rules, he was unable to receive mail, was deprived of having any contact with other Orthodox prisoners, and was denied writing paper to prevent him from corresponding with people outside the prison. In the end, as a final act of humiliation, Father Maksym was tried before the judge and jury in the presence of a crowd of sensational spectators in an auditorium.

It appeared that perhaps the simplicity, humility, and the soft, pleasing voice of Father Maksym would create a problem for him as he attempted to defend himself and the other Orthodox people of Galicia. Instead, all of these personal characteristics made a great impression on the people that met him, including the judge, drawing them to the conclusion that a person of such good character must be innocent. During an intense and emotional trial in Lvov which lasted from March 9 to June 6, 1914, and in the presence of many foreign correspondents, the jury unanimously decided that all charges were false, thus proving the defendants innocent. On June 7, 1914, Father Maksym, already in failing health, left the prison and returned to his native village of Zdenia, where he was greeted by his family and relatives. Here, he lived only six weeks continuing his pastoral mission.

Shortly thereafter, World War I began and the Austrian officials arrested Father Maksym, his pregnant wife, Pelagia, and his father, Timothy. They were taken on August 28, 1914, to the prison in Gorlice. The morning of September 6, Father Maksym was taken before the court martial judge of the armed forces, where he was sentenced to death before a firing squad. He was taken to the courtyard by the police officer Dietrich. Father Maksym was placed at the wall with his hands tied in back of him before five members of the firing squad. They marked the area of his heart with chalk. As this was taking place, from the windows of the prison were heard cries, weeping, and screams of the Lemko Rusyn prisoners. At the command of officer Dietrich, the soldiers positioned their rifles. Father Maksym loudly exclaimed, MAY ORTHODOXY LIVE! The soldiers fired but the shots failed to bring about the instant death of Father. Officer Dietrich then came to the already fallen Father Maksym and with his revolver fired the final death shots into his head. After the death of Father Maksym, the Lemko Rusyn inmates stopped their crying and screaming and began to pray and sing LORD HAVE MERCY!

The body of Father Maksym was buried originally in the cemetery in Gorlice. At the request of his father, Timothy, in 1922 his body was exhumed and placed in a new metal coffin and buried in the cemetery in his native Zdenie.

The fate of the family of the martyred Father Maksym is the thorny path of all the Lemko Rusyns. Following the execution of Father Maksym, his pregnant wife, Pelagia Sandowicz, together with his father, Timothy, were taken to the concentration camp in Talerhof (Austria). The son of Father Maksym, four-year-old Sergius, was taken by the departing Russian army deep into Russia. While in the concentration camp, Matushka Pelagia gave birth to her second son, and named him Maksym after his father.

In 1937, the young Maksym Sandowicz, (Jr.) following his marriage to Tatiana from the home of Galle, accepted ordination to the Holy Priesthood by the laying on of hands of Metropolitan Dionysius of Warsaw. He continued till his death on July 8, 1991, the pastoral mission of his father, the martyred Priest Maksym Sandowicz, serving the Faith of the Fathers – Holy Orthodoxy!

Holy Father Maksym, pray unto God for us!

This and That

Questioning Evolution Theory: Human Deficiencies

Human beings are conspicuous in the natural world for being weak and slow, and for having poor senses of smell and hearing. Why? Evolutionists have multiple stories. One is that because humans walk upright, they can see farther on open veldt and thus have substituted vision for other senses that just are not necessary.

This makes no sense which, as so often in matters evolutionary, doesn't matter. Obviously being able to detect approaching predators at night by smell would be a great advantage. Lions are the color of dirt and dead vegetation and take advantage of both. Horses, which have good vision, and eyes at about the level of a human's, have an excellent sense of smell. This story doesn't live up even to the usual evolutionary standard of vague plausibility.

Another explanation of the poor olfaction of humans is that a more acute sense would require larger olfactory regions in the brain and, since a surprisingly large proportion of the body's energy is expended by the brain, these larger olfactory regions would increase the need for food and cause starvation in time of famine.

Does this make sense? No. Consider rats – They have a much better sense of smell than do humans, which they use in finding what they regard as food. – Fred Reed, *The Bugs in Darwin*

The moral insanity exemplified by the rapid deconstruction of the family, and even of gender identity, and the near-irresistible propaganda machine calling it progress... are indicative of America's advanced state of decadence. At this point, I don't see much point in arguing with those whose ideological or moral commitments prevent them from seeing what is clear to us Christians (and Muslims and Jews) who are steeped in the tradition of Abrahamic moral theology. Yes, we have to keep fighting politically to protect ourselves and our communities, but the more important fight is to build up the institutions, communities, and ways of living that will endure what is, and is to come. We have to *resist*. You don't do that by simply having the right attitudes and principles. You have to live them out, consistently, in community.

– Rod Dreher

When Massachusetts passed the state law legalizing gay marriage, no one had thought of the implications regarding adoption. Catholic Adoption service, refusing to abandon their stance that an adopting couple should be a male/female union, has essentially withdrawn its adoption work from the largest Irish Catholic city west of Dublin. They are active elsewhere in the USA. Since the Supreme Court went with the new definition, the Catholic adoption services now face the Massachusetts problem on a national basis.

Sadly, there is no doubt that all faith-based organizations are now facing this same issue nationwide: either abandon your constitutional right to religious freedom in defending the traditional definition of marriage, or face losing your licenses, certifications, tax-exempt status, your very right to exist.

To those who would say that tradition has established the government's right to perform marriage, I would reply as follows: *tradition* has also permitted judges to display the Ten Commandments in their courtrooms. Government ignores tradition when it suits their purpose. The Supreme Court, sadly, seems to have forgotten that limiting the purview of the government is as important as protecting it.

–Dennis Garvin

“We have to accept that we really are living in a culturally post-Christian nation. The fundamental norms Christians have long been able to depend on no longer exist.” – Rod Dreher, June 30, 2015

Scientism - Fred Reed, June 5, 2015

Science enjoys great prestige as it has led to great results, such as iPhones. Perhaps because of this scientists, for some reason thought to be smarter than the rest of humanity, are seen as oracles and almost as priests. Yet they have nothing to say, and can have nothing to say, about meaning, purpose, origins, destiny, consciousness, beauty, right and wrong, Good and Evil, death, love or loathing.

These are matters of some importance to normal people whose thinking is not crippled by strict adherence to the Laws of Motion. A scientist, as a scientist, must dismiss them as empty abstractions, simply ignore them, or provide unsatisfactory answers and quickly change the subject. A physicist may speak solemnly of the Big Bang, but it has no more explanatory power than Genesis. A child of six years will ask, "But where did God come from?" Or the Big Bang.

A man whose thinking has not been shackled by the restrictions of science can say, "This sunset is beautiful." A scientist cannot not, not if he is thinking as a scientist. Beauty has no physical definition, the only kind allowable in the sciences.

Trouble begins when one tries to stretch a system beyond its premises. Here we come to scientism, as distinct from science. A great many people, some of them scientists, want science to explain everything whatever. This of course is the function of a religion.

Scientism, like other varieties of political correctness, is de rigueur among much of the cognitive or approximately cognitive elite, and has been inculcated in the populace by endless repetition. The credo runs roughly Big Bang, stars form, planets, oceans, life, evolution, Manhattan. Acceptance—unexamined acceptance—of scientism is now regarded as evidence of right thinking. Most who accept it have no idea what they are accepting, but they know that it is the proper thing to do.

For much of the public, this is a sort of religion by Disney, the Force Be With You, with an origin of of the universe that, well, you know,

the scientists understand it, and we are evolving upward and onward into like, better beings and all. And death? Let us speak of other things.

....The acolytes of scientism invariably see the enemy as Creationism, which they correctly if not consciously recognize as a competing religion. Thus the desire to remove believers in any religion from scientific posts. Thus the pathological outrage that arises if the schools of Kansas want to mention Biblical Creation. Why? Obviously doing so would not result in the burning of laboratories or crucifixion of chemists, and would be unlikely to discourage a kid from going into the sciences. This doesn't matter. Heresy cannot be allowed.

Scientism is part of the curious culture-wide campaign to remove any trace of religion from public life. It is the equivalent of the Christian iconoclasm of the late Roman times... Scientism requires a willful ignoring of undeniable aspects of reality, such as death.

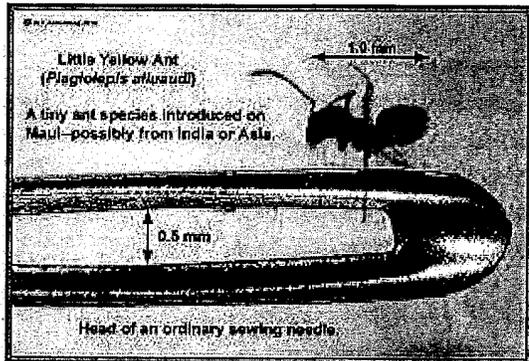
Note that all science is physics. Chemistry is the physics of the interaction of atoms and molecules, biochemistry of particular classes of molecules. Consequently evolution is a subset of physics. (How is it not? Everything that happens in an organism from metabolism to mutation obeys the laws of physics. If this is not true, then physical behavior is affected by Something Outside of Physics—eeeeeeeeeeek!)

Part of physics is the requirement of causality. Every physical event, which means every event, must have prior physical causes.

Anything that doesn't can't happen. But do we really know this? A normal person can wonder. A scientist cannot.

Scientism appears at its most desperate in matters of evolution, where things clearly explicable in physical terms (astronomy, electronics, combustion) bump up against things not nearly so explicable (life, consciousness, motivations). Scientism always finds a way, however strained, to avoid the ravages of doubt. Conceding or even considering anything outside of that small scientific box would open up a Whole Lot of Doubt.

The Impossibility of Ants – A Deep Study ~ Fred Reed



I will now offer a formal proof of the nonexistence of ants. First, we will note the above ant on top of the eye of a needle. We will further note that there is almost no ant there. We will now ponder the size of its brain, to include distributed parts of it. If an ant is so small that it almost isn't there, and most of an ant consists of legs, chitin, digestive things, and so on, then its brain, to include all of its nervous tissues, is greatly more isn't-there.

We will now consider what an ant can do. First, it can walk. If you think this is no great shucks, talk to a robotics engineer with a cable-connected supercomputer. Ask him how easy it is to make six legs with multiple joints each work together while climbing over things. If you think about the amount of sensory feedback necessary to know where these legs are at a given moment, and what the pressures and angles are, you will get dizzy. The ant does it effortlessly, with about as many brain cells as a congressman has IQ points. This would suggest perhaps three brain cells.

There is worse, much worse. That same ant, with only three congressional brain cells, can interpret the data from both of its compound eyes and its ocelli—tiny non-compound eyes. Now, the guys who wrote Photoshop could merge all those inputs from a jillion ommatidia and come up with something reasonable as an image, but doing it in real-time, in the equivalent of about six lines of code, with three brain cells for processing power—they would run screaming to the nearest bar and begin living under a park bench.

The same ant knows, somehow, to dig a nest properly, to run like hell when it is scared, and to care for the queen and the eggs and larvae. It manages its internal organs and antennae. It knows how to groom itself, putting it ahead of many teenagers, and how to find food, which requires operating the senses used to do this. I could go on. But since each of these things is impossible, so is the ant. Therefore, ants do not exist. QED.

(I suspect that the impossibility of several things in one nonexistent ant is the product the individual impossibilities. I will leave this matter of multidimensional impossibilities to the reader as an exercise.)

If I may lapse momentarily into unwonted seriousness, I claim these picnic micromonstrosities pose a baffling question of cybernetics. They must be doing something far beyond the grasp of our tiny boiling imaginations. Replicating an ant in hardware of the same size is out of the question. Molecular computing? Well, the little beast does it some way. Humans with our quart-and-a-third of mushy brains can do much more than ants can, but not proportionately more. The nerve tissue of how many ants would be needed to fill on human cranium?

To which I usually get the witless response, "But Fred, ants have an entirely different kind of brain." That's not the answer. It's the question.

Excerpt from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*:

"Love one another, fathers," the elder taught (as far as Alyosha could recall afterwards). "Love God's people. For we are not holier than those in the world because we have come here and shut ourselves within these walls, but, on the contrary, anyone who comes here, by the very fact that he has come, already knows himself to be worse than all those who are in the world, worse than all on earth ... And the longer a monk lives within his walls, the more keenly he must be aware of it. For otherwise he had no reason to come here.

"But when he knows that he is not only worse than all those in the world, but is also guilty before all people, on behalf of all and for all, for all human sins, the world's and each person's, only then will the goal of our unity be achieved. For you must know, my dear ones, that each of us is undoubtedly guilty on behalf of all and for all on earth, not only because of the common guilt of the world, but personally, each one of us, for all people and for each person on this earth.

"This knowledge is the crown of the monk's path, and of every man's path on earth. For monks are not a different sort of men, but only such as all men on earth ought also to be. Only then will our hearts be moved to a love that is infinite, universal, and that knows no satiety. Then each of us will be able to gain the whole world by love and wash away the world's sins with his tears ...

"Let each of you keep close company with his heart, let each of you confess to himself untiringly. Do not be afraid of your sin, even when you perceive it, provided you are repentant, but do not place conditions on God.

"Again I say, do not be proud. Do not be proud before the lowly, do not be proud before the great either. And do not hate those who reject you, disgrace you, revile you, and slander you. Do not hate atheists, teachers of evil, materialists, not even those among them who are wicked, nor those who are good, for many of them are good, especially in our time.

"Remember them thus in your prayers: 'Save, Lord, those whom there is no one to pray for, save also those who do not want to pray to you.' And add at once: 'It is not in my pride that I pray for it, Lord, for I myself am more vile than all ...'

"Love God's people, do not let newcomers draw your flock away, for if in your laziness and disdainful pride, in your self-interest most of all, you fall asleep, they will come from all sides and lead your flock away. Teach the Gospel to the people untiringly ...

APOPTHEGMS BY THE GOD-INSPIRED ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN

- Repentance is a continual pleading towards God, with prayer and tears, for the forgiveness of our past sins. Repentance continues until we reach the future age, when there no longer exists a fear of spiritual change.
- This world is a fight and a struggle. Let us not lose courage, despair and become neglectful; through the Prayer, we must plead for God's help!
- Temptations constitute God's great gift to us, as long as we do not lose courage but instead gather the fruit of spiritual profit through our interaction with them.
- Satan exercises great and violent temptations to those who are negligent hoping that they will lose courage and resign from spiritual struggle. If you do not destroy your sensitivity to senses for the love of God, you risk spiritual death!
- God protects and covers the spiritually novice strugglers and does not allow them to fall into the hands of the demons because they do not know yet how to fight.
- Satan does not initially engage the brave, valiant and zealous fighters but waits for when their zeal has cooled down.
- The great offender (i.e., Satan) pursues the timid, fainthearted and selfish people as if in a storm because they do not rely on divine help.
- God does not permit the temptations of hunger, bodily illnesses, and dreadful visions unless it is for our spiritual benefit.
- Pride drives away our Guardian Angel while prayer and humility always draw us near him, to help us and protect us.
- Voluptuousness, comfort, and egotism are the reasons for the concession of our fall. Prayer, humility, struggles, and our Guardian Angel assist us in our salvation.
- He who labors for his sins in this world wears out his hell and punishment.
- Every comfort is followed by hardship, and every hardship for God is followed by divine comfort. Disgust and grief follow pleasure.
- Withdraw yourself from the world and you will realize its offensive odor. Abandon the causes of passions so you can be free of them.
- The person who is incapable of winning the small battles will surely never win the big ones.
- If we do not approach our Lord through prayer, the holy sacraments, and fear of God, we will by all means draw near Him through our Lord's instruction.
- A good Christian preoccupies himself with the study of God's law day and night!
- A monk is a person who, away from the world, prays to God hoping to inherit Paradise. His possessions are divine consolation and joy that arises from faith.
- Prudent and wise is the person who drives away lustful thoughts through the Prayer.
- Humble is he who accuses himself of something which he neither caused nor is it his fault. A humble person does not just withstand criticism by others; he accepts it with joy.