

ALTHOUGH it was possible to depict his outward actions in words (after a fashion), no language at all – none, I can say with truth – could ever depict his interior life, his everyday behaviour and his mind ever fixed on Heaven. I say again, not even Homer, if, as the saying goes, he returned from Hades, could do justice to his perseverance and self-discipline in abstinence and fasting; to his capacity for night vigils and prayer; to the nights, and days also, spent by him without any time taken from the work of God for indulgence either in recreation or in business, or even in

sleep or food except in so far as nature insisted – it was all so much greater in Martin than words can express. . . . No one ever saw him angered, no one saw him excited, none saw him grieving, none saw him laughing. He was always just the same, with a kind of celestial joy shining in his face, so that he seemed more than human. There was never anything on his lips but Christ, nor anything in his heart but kindness, peace, and mercy.

The Life of Saint Martin of Tours, §§XXVI–XXVII,
The Western Fathers, tr. F.R. Hoare, Sheed & Ward,
pp. 42–43

HIS COUNTEenance had a great and wonderful grace. This gift also he had from the Savior. For if he were present in a great company of monks, and any one who did not know him previously, wished to see him, immediately coming forward he passed by the rest, and hurried to Anthony, as though attracted by his appearance. Yet neither in height nor breadth was he conspicuous above others, but in the serenity of his manner and the purity of his soul. For as his soul was free from disturbances, his outward appearance was calm; so from the joy of his soul he possessed a cheerful countenance, and from his bodily movements could be perceived the condition of his soul.

St Athanasius the Great, *Life of Anthony*, §67,
NPNF Second Series, Vol. IV, p. 214.

AND [when those sent to arrest St Polycarp had] come about evening, they found him lying down in the upper room of a certain little house, from which he might have escaped into another place; but he refused, saying, “The will of God be done.” So when he heard that they were come, he went down and spake with them. And as those that were present marveled at his age and constancy, some of them said, “Was so much effort made to capture such a venerable man?” Immediately then, in that very hour, he ordered that something to eat and drink should be set before them, as much indeed as they cared for, while he besought them to allow him an hour to pray without disturbance. And on their giving him leave, he stood and prayed, being full of the grace of God, so that he could not cease for two full hours, to the astonishment of them that heard him, insomuch that many began to repent that they had come forth against so godly and venerable an old man.

The Martyrdom of Polycarp, † c.163, ch. VII,
Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol I, p. 40

AND SO FATHER NICHOLAS and Ulyasha found themselves in Petersburg. This was the time just after the so-called “Living Church” appeared. Walking about the city, Father Nicholas and Ulyasha went everywhere, avoiding the churches of the “Living Church.” Once they entered a church which was near their residence. Here a possessed woman angrily threw herself at Father Nicholas with a scream: “Oh, you baldy, oh, you whiner – have you come here too to torture us?” The people were standing around did not know what to think, looking at Father Nicholas, who was dressed in a simple peasant garment. But soon the people felt that it was not at all an ordinary man they were looking at, despite the fact that the exiles strove to stay in the shadows.

The holy New Confessor Seraphim of Kharkov [priest
Nicholas Zagorovsky], †1943, feast-day Sept. 30,
Russia's Catacomb Saints, Platina, p. 378

THE CITY OF OBOYAN was taken by the Germans [during WWII]. Soldiers were placed in all the houses. The little house where Father Nicholas was staying was also seized. He was offered a place to sleep on the floor. However, the German soldiers were so struck by the appearance of this Elder, who remained constantly at prayer, that they not only did not take his bed but even took off their shoes when they entered his room so as not to disturb him at prayer.

The holy New Confessor Seraphim of Kharkov,
op. cit., p. 382

AUXILIARIS at that time governed Gaul from the very pinnacle of the Prefecture. He had two reasons for his joy at the Bishop's coming. He wanted to make the acquaintance of a man so famous for his spiritual powers, & his own wife had for a long time suffered from a quartan ague. He advanced to meet him much earlier than etiquette required and was held motionless by wonder. The majesty of his bearing, his knowledge in discussion, the authority in his preaching, all filled Auxiliaris with awe and he realised that the Bishop's fame did him less than justice; reality exceeded report.

The Life of Saint Germanus of Auxerre, §XXIV,
The Western Fathers, op. cit., pp. 305–6

HE ARRIVED [in Milan] on the solemn festival of its saints, for which great numbers of bishops had assembled. While the sacred mysteries of the Liturgy were being celebrated on the altar, he entered, unknown and unexpected. Immediately, one of the congregation, who was possessed by a demon, shouted out in a tremendous voice:

“Germanus, why do you pursue us into Italy? Be content that you have driven us out of Gaul. Be content that your prayers have defeated both us and the ocean. Why do you scour the whole world? Take a rest and let us have a rest ourselves.”

Amazement and terror filled the congregation. They looked at one another, asking which was Germanus; and, in spite of the poverty-stricken look of his clothes, he was recognised by the majesty of his face.

The Life of Saint Germanus of Auxerre, §XXXII,
The Western Fathers, op. cit., p. 311

*O Lord, by Thy will
hast Thou granted power
to my beauty*

Psalm 29:7

Pearls from the Holy Fathers

November 4–10, 2013

Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA www.htmpong