

## April Fools?

I've done it myself. I've heard someone on TV expressing an opinion which seemed to ignore the facts, lacked logic, and had little to do with the issue under discussion. I've then thought to myself: 'What an idiot!'.

No Christian should ever do this. Many sins, which the secular world believes that we Christians think important, are less serious than the dangerous sin of contempt for our fellow human beings. As Our Lord says in Matthew 5:22. Whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire. 'Hell of fire'? Yes; the road to that hell is first irritation, which becomes anger, which becomes consuming rage, which lashes out in all directions; and eventually burns our soul in the hell of fire.

We see this in the world around us. Like when contempt for a schoolgirl whom her fellow pupils considered 'stupid', led to cyber bullying, and ended in suicide. Or where someone, whose child the neighbours consider to be a 'moron', found their house the subject of angry vandalism, until they were driven out of their home. Will just a little more politically correcting of our language, the counselling of victims, or their treatment with the products of Big Pharma (= global pharmaceutical industries); be enough to deal with such evils?

Perhaps it's time for so-called fools to be seen in a fresh light. In the Orthodox Christian Church, the description 'Fool for Christ' is applied to some of our greatest saints. They are those who reflect the teaching of scripture: 'God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise'. (1 Corinthians 1:27).

In the 18th century, such a one was Saint Xenia of St Petersburg. Upon the death of her husband, when she was 26 years old, she distributed her inherited fortune to the poor. Her relations wanted to stop this by getting her declared insane, so that they could get their hands on her money. But they didn't succeed; and so she wandered the streets of St Petersburg supporting others, whilst dressed in the clothes of her late husband. A 'fool'? Yes; thanks be to God. And after her death, her grave became a place of pilgrimage; so much was she loved. When tempted to use words like idiot, moron, or fool; let's put her, and those like her, before God in our prayers; and avoid what makes for worldly wisdom.

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