



"Commentary on the Epistle of St Paul to the Galatians" by St John Chrysostom. Coptic Monastery of St Paul. Red Sea.

Saint John Chrysostom is ranked among the greatest fathers of the church. His gifts of eloquence of speech, fluency of languages, in-depth writings and interpretations, as well as his piety and courageous spiritual nature have made the greatness of this saint legendary.

Saint John Chrysostom was born in Syria in the city of Antioch in the year 347AD. He was the only son born to a prosperous father, Sakondos. Sakondos was the commander-in-chief of the imperial troops in Antioch which brought favor and wealth to the family. Saint John's mother, Anthosa, was a righteous mother known for her devotion to the Lord.

Saint John Chrysostom's name literally meant "Golden Mouth." He lived up to his famous name from a very young age. His mother provided St John with the most knowledgeable masters within the Syrian empire. Eloquence was esteemed the highest accomplishment and this was studied during his young years. Even in his youth he greatly excelled in the masters. Also as a youth Saint John Chrysostom

studied Greek Wisdom in the city of Athens. He surpassed his classmates in knowledge and also in virtue. He then studied law.

During his study of the law, at the age of 20 years, Saint John Chrysostom was baptized. Following his baptism, he left the study of law and attended a school for monks and forsook the vanities of the world choosing to enter the hermetic community life.

Also at the age of 20 Saint John Chrysostom's father died. Saint John gave all his inherited riches to the poor and those in need. His young heart was deeply concerned with the plight of the poor.

It has been said that during his first years in the hermetic community among the mountains south of Antioch, there abided a Syrian hermit, Ansosynos, who saw Saint Peter and Saint John the Evangelist give Saint John Chrysostom a Holy Bible and say, "Do not be afraid, whosoever you shall bind, shall be bound, and whosoever you shall loose, shall be loosed." The elder hermit foresaw that one day Saint John would surely be a pope.

The grace of the Lord inspired Saint John Chrysostom to write many homilies, sermons, and interpret vast numbers of books while he was a young deacon. He was to quickly rise through the

church ranks. Saint Melatius, patriarch of Antioch ordained Saint John deacon. Saint Flavin, the following patriarch of Antioch ordained Saint John Chrysostom priest in 386AD at the age of 40.

When Nectarius, patriarch of Constantinople departed, Emperor Arcadius summoned Saint John Chrysostom and made him patriarch. In 398 His Holiness Pope Theophilus, the Egyptian Pope, arrived at Constantinople and consecrated Saint John Chrysostom "Bishop of the See of Constantinople" (Patriarch) on February 26.

It has often been said that Saint John Chrysostom conducted his See in the same manner of the Apostles. He continued steadfastly in teaching, preaching, and interpreting even more books of the church. He regarded the poor as the first of all obligations as a Christian and never ceased in his ministry to them and in encouraging people to give to the poor.

He is known today as one of the greatest preachers to ever preach and a large number of his sermons still exist today.

History records this blessed saint as trimming the expenses of the patriarchate to a minimum as never before known, and the sums of money saved were given to the poor. Saint John Chrysostom was

neither concerned for the dignity of the position nor the comforts of life. He was a father to the poor.

The wife of the emperor who made St John Chrysostom patriarch had a great desire for wealth. She once forcefully took a garden which belonged to a poor widow. The widow went to St John with her misfortune. St John asks the emperor's wife to return the garden to its true owner. She did not obey and St John prevented the emperor's wife from entering the church and partaking of the Holy Communion.

The emperor's wife summoned the council of bishops and proclaimed her displeasure with him and had St John Chrysostom excommunicated. He was exiled to the Island of Thrace for one night only. The people became greatly enraged with St John's exile and gathered around the emperor's palace demanding the return of their patriarch. A severe earthquake shook the city almost destroying it. Taking this as a sign of God's displeasure with the exile, the emperor's wife went to the emperor asking him to return Saint John.

The exile was not to be soon forgotten. Saint John Chrysostom's life was to always be full of struggle. St John ardently attacked the behavior, dress and adornment of the upper class, particularly the

women. Christians boldly attended races on Good Friday and games in the stadium on Holy Saturday. He constantly battled this immorality and sin and courageously preached against these behaviors openly in his sermons. Although a compassionate father of the sinner, he remained firm in maintaining discipline.

His enemies together with the emperor's wife, who took his morality issues as a personal attack, accused him falsely before the emperor and he was once again exiled. He was provided no minimal comforts and was moved from place to place in untoward weather conditions so his health would deteriorate quickly on route to Comana, his place of exile. He died in poor health in Comana, in the year 407AD. His departure of the earthly life was the Holy Cross Day. Having been dressed in white garments by the clergy of the chapel of Saint Basilicas a short time after receiving the Holy Communion Saint John Chrysostom truly departed in peace.

During the reign of Theodosius II, the son of Emperor Arcadius (the emperor who exiled St John) his holy body was taken back to Constantinople where it was placed in the Church of the Apostles.

St. Cyril, the 24th Pope of the See of Alexandria, denounced the exile of St. John Chrysostom. History

documents that St. Cyril knew of the regret of the exile and cruel death of the Bishop of the See of Constantinople by Pope Theophilus.

"Glory be to God for all things" was the last words uttered by the great saint, John Chrysostom. Truly, glory was brought to God through the life led by this gifted and great saint, a life golden from youth.

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