

January 27

## ON THE LIFE OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

### 100.1 First Point

Saint John Chrysostom, predisposed by grace, left the world at a time when he could have lived there with considerable honor because of his eloquence, which was admired by everyone. He withdrew into solitude where he devoted himself to the study of Holy Scripture, which gave him great insight and a profound religious spirit.

You have the happiness and the advantage to be separated from the world and frequently to read and listen to the reading of Holy Scripture. You should as a result learn from this source the science of salvation and the holy maxims which your profession obliges you to practice and to teach to others. Meditate on these truths from time to time, and take them as the usual topic of your conversation.

### 100.2 Second Point

The Bishop of Antioch obliged this saint to preach the Gospel, which he did so successfully and with such remarkable eloquence that he charmed all who heard him and at the same time drew their hearts to God. That is how someone filled with God in solitude can boldly and effectively speak of God and make him known to those who are buried in sin and ignorance, and live in a state of blindness that is hidden from themselves.<sup>555</sup>

Since it is your duty to teach your disciples every day to know God, to explain to them the truths of the Gospel, and to train them in their practice, you yourselves should be entirely filled with God and burning with love for his holy law, so that your words may have their proper effect on your disciples. Preach by your example, and practice before their eyes what you wish to convince them to believe and do.

### 100.3 Third Point

Having been made Patriarch of Constantinople in spite of his own resistance, and at the request of the emperor, Saint John was zealous in undertaking a general moral reform and tolerating no disorders. This led to strong confrontation with the empress, whose behavior in many respects was not Christian. Before long this brought great persecution on the saint and he was several times driven from his see.

That is how those are treated who by their blameless life and their sound doctrine uphold the Gospel and the cause of religion. The demon, unable to endure their progress in virtue and the good they do for souls, never ceases to harass them by his own efforts or by those of his agents. If you live holily, says Saint Paul, expect to be persecuted.<sup>556</sup> Such will be your lot and your destiny as long as you live in this world.

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Saint John (Ca 349-407) earned the name Chrysostom, which means golden mouth, because of his eloquence. He was born at Antioch in Syria, son of a commander in the imperial army, and was trained as a lawyer. After his conversion to Christianity, he withdrew into solitude with some friends and began the work of writing treatises which have earned him the title of Doctor of the Church. Later as Patriarch of Constantinople, he was sent into exile by the empress; on the way, partly as a result of the rough treatment given him, he died and could be considered a martyr, though he did not actually shed his blood. Saint Innocent I (Pope from 401 to 417) inscribed his name among the saints in 407. He is buried in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. His feast is now celebrated on September 13.