



Saint John Chrysostom, one of the greatest Fathers of the Church, was a true “lion of God,” whose voice resounded powerfully in his time and continues to illuminate ours. His name, *Chrysostom* (golden-mouthed), reflects the beauty and depth of his preaching, which not only moved the faithful but also challenged the powerful. But who was this saint? What can we learn today from his life, his courage, and his teachings? In this article, we will explore his history, his thought, and his relevance to our Christian lives today.

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## 1. A Young Man Passionate for God in a Time of Crisis

Saint John Chrysostom was born in Antioch around the year 349, in a Roman Empire at a crossroads. The Church had emerged from the catacombs, but now faced internal challenges, doctrinal struggles, and increasing worldliness. His mother, Anthusa, a deeply pious woman who had been widowed at a young age, played a decisive role in his Christian education.

From his youth, John stood out for his intelligence and eloquence. He studied rhetoric under Libanius, the greatest pagan orator of his time, who, according to tradition, remarked upon seeing his talent: *“If the Christians had not stolen him from me, he would have been my successor.”* But God had other plans.

Renouncing a worldly career, John immersed himself in an ascetic life, dedicating himself to the study of Scripture and prayer in the desert. However, the harshness of his penance affected his health, forcing him to return to the city. This period forged his character: a man of God who feared no adversity and was willing to face any challenge for love of Christ.

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## 2. The Fiery Preacher Who Moved Antioch

Upon returning to Antioch, he was ordained a deacon and later a priest. From his pulpit, his sermons attracted crowds. He not only taught with depth but also preached with courage. He denounced greed, injustice, moral corruption, and the excessive luxury of the rich, while calling for sincere conversion.

One of his most emblematic moments was during the crisis of the “statue riots” in 387. When the people of Antioch, outraged by heavy taxes, destroyed statues of Emperor Theodosius, the city feared severe retaliation. It was John Chrysostom who, with his eloquence and call for



repentance, calmed tempers and helped the emperor show clemency.

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### 3. Patriarch of Constantinople: The Shepherd Who Would Not Be Bought

His fame led him to be chosen as Patriarch of Constantinople in the year 398. However, his arrival in the capital of the Empire was a time bomb. Unlike other bishops who enjoyed courtly luxury, John Chrysostom lived with simplicity, reformed the clergy, fought corruption, and defended the poor.

He openly denounced Empress Eudoxia and the aristocracy for their dissolute lives. On one occasion, when Eudoxia took one of his sermons as a personal attack, he exclaimed: *“Once again Herodias rages, once again she dances, once again she seeks the head of John!”*—comparing the situation to the death of John the Baptist. His words earned him powerful enemies.

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### 4. Exile and Death: Glory Through the Cross

Eventually, his enemies succeeded in having him exiled in 403. But even in exile, his voice was not silenced. From afar, he continued to write letters filled with love and faith. During his second exile, he was sent to Pitsunda, in the remote Caucasus. His health deteriorated, and in 407, exhausted and ill, he passed away, uttering his last words: *“Glory to God for all things.”*

Thirty years later, his body was brought back to Constantinople, and Emperor Theodosius II, son of Eudoxia, publicly asked for forgiveness on behalf of his mother for the persecution against him. His legacy would be immortalized in the Church.

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## 5. His Thought and Its Relevance Today

Saint John Chrysostom left behind teachings that remain a guiding light in our time:

### a) Love for Sacred Scripture

He was a master of the Bible. For him, the Word of God was the nourishment of the soul and had to be intensely meditated upon and lived out. Today, in a world where many Catholics are unfamiliar with Scripture, his call to the reading and meditation of the Bible remains crucial.

### b) Denunciation of Worldliness

He fearlessly denounced corruption within the Church and the excessive influence of political power. In our era, where materialism and secularization threaten the faith, his courage challenges us to live an authentic Christian life.

### c) Charity as the Heart of Faith

He once said: *"If you cannot find Christ in the poor at the church doors, you will not find Him in the chalice either."* He reminds us that our faith must be translated into active love for those most in need.

### d) The Strength of Forgiveness and Humility

Despite being persecuted and exiled, he never harbored resentment. He teaches us that true strength lies in trusting God, even in the midst of adversity.

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## Conclusion: A Saint for Our Time

Saint John Chrysostom remains a prophetic witness for our days. His love for truth, his courage, and his deep spirituality challenge us to live an uncompromising Christianity.

In an age where many seek to conform to the world, Chrysostom reminds us that true faith is radical, that charity is not optional, and that the Gospel must be preached without fear. May his golden voice continue to resonate in our hearts and inspire us to live with the same



passion for Christ.

*"Glory to God for all things."*