



# The Twenty-First Day of the Month of January

## The Life of Our Holy Monastic Father Maximus the Confessor and Martyr<sup>1</sup>

The venerable Maximus, whose name means “greatest” and whose way of life was unsurpassed, was born in the renowned queen of cities, Constantinople. His parents were of noble lineage and Orthodox, and gave him an excellent education. Maximus thoroughly studied philosophy and theology, and was widely respected for his wisdom, even in the imperial palace. Impressed by his knowledge and virtuous life, the Emperor Heraclius compelled him to become *asekretis* or first secretary and made him a chief counselor. The entire senate loved and respected Maximus, whose competence in affairs of government was of the highest order.

In those days appeared the heresy of Monothelism, according to which Christ our Lord possesses a single will. Its antecedent was the delusion of Eutyches, who asserted that our Lord has but one nature, and denied the Orthodox teaching that He, as God incarnate, has two undivided and unmingled natures, wills, and operations in one person. First to defend and disseminate Monothelism were Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria, and Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople. The Emperor Heraclius was drawn into this error early on by the two hierarchs. Cyrus in Alexandria and Sergius in Constantinople convened local councils endorsing

---

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviated from the account written by the saint’s disciple Anastasius the *apocrisarios* or legate of the Church of Rome

the heresy, which then spread throughout the East. Only Saint Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, rejected the false doctrine. Seeing that the Emperor, his courtiers, and many others had been corrupted, the blessed Maximus feared lest he go astray. He resigned from his duties at court and renounced all the world's glory, went to a monastery in Chrysopolis, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, and became a monk, preferring *rather to be an outcast in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of sinners.*<sup>2</sup> On account of his virtuous life, he was chosen abbot after a few years.

Meanwhile, Patriarch Sergius convinced Heraclius to publish a decree called the *Ekthesis*, or "exposition," propagating Monothelism. The entire population of the Empire was ordered to accept it, and as a result, the Church of Christ was thrown into confusion. Abba Maximus observed how turmoil prevailed in Constantinople and throughout the East, how the heretics multiplied and took control of churches, and how the Orthodox were buffeted by the tempest of persecution and diminished in number. Profoundly downcast, he sighed and wept bitterly, until he learned that the heresy had no followers in the West and had been completely rejected there. Severus, Pope of Rome, scorned the *Ekthesis*, and his successor John had it anathematized at a council; so the blessed Maximus decided to leave his monastery and go to the West. As an Orthodox Christian, he hoped to find refuge with the Orthodox of old Rome, since the Holy Land was under attack by the Saracens and it was impossible to reach Jerusalem. On the way he visited the bishops of North Africa, conversed with them, confirmed them in the faith, and advised them how to avoid being snared by the cunning adversaries. To those living in remote cities, he sent letters expounding the dogmas of Orthodoxy and warning about the dangers of heresy.

About that time the Patriarch of Constantinople died and was succeeded by the apostate Pyrrhus. Cyrus of Alexandria also died, then Heraclius. Before he expired, the Emperor, deeply shamed that many renowned and holy hierarchs and wise fathers had rejected and anathematized the *Ekthesis*, made it known that not he, but Sergius had written the document, and that he had only

---

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 83

signed it at the Patriarch's insistence. Heraclius' son Constantine was next to rule the Empire, but after four months was secretly poisoned by his step-mother Martina. With the assent of Patriarch Pyrrhus, Martina elevated her son Heraclonas to the throne. After he had reigned for six months, court dignitaries rose up against Heraclonas and Martina, cut off their noses, and exiled them in disgrace. The courtiers chose as ruler Constans, son of the murdered Constantine, grandson of Heraclius and father of Constantine Pogonatos.<sup>3</sup> When Constans became emperor, Pyrrhus became very frightened, knowing that the people regarded him as a conspirator with Martina in the death of Constantine. He stepped down as patriarch and fled to Africa, and his see was occupied by Paul, another heretic. The new emperor announced that he also adhered to Monothelitism, of which he became a notorious champion and disseminator.

The venerable Maximus was still in Africa when Pyrrhus arrived there. The Patriarch traveled from one city to another, hoping to corrupt the Orthodox. He might have seriously harmed the churches of Christ, had he not encountered the godly Maximus as an opponent. The two men spent many hours debating, and at length the patrician Gregory, governor of the land, convened a council which all the bishops of Africa were required to attend. The divinely wise Maximus, basing himself on the Scriptures and the dogmas of the Holy Fathers, thoroughly refuted Pyrrhus at the synod, showing that as Christ God has two natures, so He must have two wills and operations, indivisible in His one person. Admitting defeat, Pyrrhus united himself to the Orthodox. He was received warmly by the Church, treated with the utmost esteem, and allowed to employ the title of patriarch. Pyrrhus even wrote a book confessing the true faith. He went to Rome to visit Pope Theodore, John's successor, and the Pope greeted him respectfully as the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople. Soon it became known in the Imperial City that Pyrrhus had joined the Orthodox. The heretics, burning with envy, spread a rumor that the African bishops and the Pope had forced Pyrrhus to assent to their opinions. This slander reached the Emperor, who immedi-

---

<sup>3</sup> "The bearded," so-called because of his long, thick beard. Pogonatos was in fact Constans, the father, whose official name was actually Constantine. (Tr.)

ately sent to Italy one of his officials, a heretic named Olympius, with orders to return Pyrrhus to Monothelitism. Olympius took up residence in Ravenna, summoned Pyrrhus from Rome, and convinced him to espouse heresy again. Like a dog returning to its vomit, Pyrrhus rendered himself worthy of the anathema subsequently pronounced by the holy fathers against him and those of like mind.

At that time the Emperor Constans, under the influence of the false-patriarch Paul of Constantinople, signed a heretical edict called the *Typos*,<sup>4</sup> just as his grandfather Heraclius once signed the Ekthesis. He distributed the document throughout the Empire and ordered everyone to accept it. The *Typos* reached Rome when Pope Theodore was on his deathbed. After Theodore's repose, the blessed Martin became Pope.<sup>5</sup> The Emperor wanted Martin to endorse the *Typos*, but he refused, saying, "Were the entire world to embrace the new heresy, I would not. I will never renounce the doctrines of the Gospels and the apostles or the traditions of the Holy Fathers, even if I am threatened with execution."

Saint Maximus was in Rome at that time and advised the blessed Martin to convene a local council and condemn the *Typos* as alien to the teachings of Christ's Church. The Pope agreed, and 105 bishops, with Abba Maximus, anathematized the errors of Cyrus, Sergius, Pyrrhus, Paul, and the *Typos*. Afterwards, the Pope wrote to the faithful throughout the world, confirming them in Orthodoxy, explaining the errors of the heretics, and cautioning against them. When the Emperor heard about this, he became furious and sent his regent Theodore Calliopes to Italy with orders to seize Pope Martin. The charges against the Pope were as follows: that he had entered into secret negotiations with the Saracens, urging them to attack the Graeco-Roman Empire; that he did not keep to the faith handed down by the Fathers; and that he blasphemed the most pure Mother of God. Upon arrival in Rome, the Emperor's representative publicly accused the Pope of these crimes. The blessed Martin, who was completely innocent, made this response: "I have never had any dealings with the Saracens, although I have sent alms to Orthodox

---

<sup>4</sup> The *Typos* forbade all discussion of Christ's wills and energies. (Tr.)

<sup>5</sup> Commemorated on April 4

brethren living in poverty under their oppressive rule. As for those who do not honor, confess, and venerate the immaculate Mother of God, may they be accursed in this life and in the age to come. It is not we who betray the faith transmitted by the holy apostles and Holy Fathers, but those who reason other than we do."

Constan's deputy paid no heed to Martin's defense, but pronounced him guilty as charged, adding that Martin had become pontiff by illegal means. He secretly seized the Pope by night and dispatched him under guard to the Emperor. From Constantinople, Saint Martin was exiled to Cherson, where he died.

Shortly before the Pope's arrest, the venerable Maximus and his disciple Anastasius were taken into custody and sent in chains from Rome to Constantinople. This was done at the Emperor's command, since he knew that Maximus had advised Saint Martin to convene the synod that condemned Monothelitism and the Typos. When Saint Maximus disembarked at Byzantium, Constan's men met him, glaring fiercely. They shamelessly laid hold of the godly one, who was barefoot and half-naked, and dragged him through the streets. His grieving disciple followed, but was not allowed to share his dark cell; instead, he was cast into a different dungeon. Several days later, the saint was taken to the palace to be questioned by the entire senate; the Emperor, however, was not present. As Maximus entered, the eyes of all, filled with hatred, were upon him. One of the officials, the *gazo-phylax*, or treasurer, was charged with the interrogation. He was a smooth-tongued man, adept at presenting falsehood as fact, devising specious arguments, and distorting the truth. What insolence and duplicity he displayed! What reproaches and taunts he heaped upon our blessed father! He was not abashed by the elder's age (Saint Maximus was then over seventy years old); nor by the grace which shone from his countenance; nor by his meek, proper bearing; nor by his unaffected, kindly manner; nor by the monastic habit. Hurling vicious slander against the innocent one, he displayed the utmost malice and proved himself a master of guile. He could not, however, provide well-founded rebuttals to the saint's unpretentious, sober arguments, and was ultimately reduced to confusion and vanquished. The *apocrisarios*

or legate of the Roman Church and disciple of Saint Maximus, another Anastasius, describes in detail the mendacious accusations made against the saint, but we can do no more than to provide here a summary of his account.

Stepping forward to confront his gentle opponent, the evil treasurer began by insulting and attempting to frighten him. He called Maximus a sly traitor, an enemy of the Emperor, and ascribed all manner of wicked, insidious deeds to him. The saint denied betraying the realm and asked his accuser why he was vilifying him. The treasurer responded by producing witnesses who alleged that Maximus had handed over many great cities to the barbarians. "You have torn Alexandria, Pentapolis, and the whole of Egypt from the Empire," he raved, "giving them to the Saracens, towards whom you are well disposed."

The saint pointed out that the charge was ridiculous. "What have I, a monk, to do with the defense and conquest of cities?" he asked. "Why would I, a Christian, aid Saracens? I desire only blessings for Christian cities."

The bold-faced liar responded with fresh falsehood, shouting that the blessed Maximus preferred the Western kings to the Eastern Emperor, and introduced perjurers to confirm this. The venerable one sighed, "I thank God that He has allowed me to fall into your hands and I hope that by enduring these afflictions, my voluntary transgressions might be purged. Regarding your last charge, I would like to know: did you hear me condemning the Emperor, or did others tell you what I said?"

The accusers answered, "We heard it from others, who heard it from you."

At this the saint demanded that the hearers testify in person, only to be told that they were dead. "Why then," asked Saint Maximus, "did you not interrogate me while they were alive? You would have spared yourself the labor of fabricating many lies and been able to convict me on the basis of evident truth. It is obvious that I have committed no crime and that my slanderers have no fear of God, Who searches out the hearts of men. May I cease to be counted by the Lord as a Christian and never behold His countenance if at any time I have entertained in my thoughts, recounted, or given ear to anyone proposing the despicable deeds you ascribe to me!"

Then the saint's enemies produced another false witness, Gregory by name, who asserted that in Rome he heard Anastasius, Maximus' disciple, say that he and his teacher held that Constans claimed priestly authority. Saint Maximus directly refuted Gregory, saying, "When this man was in Rome, we discussed Monothelitism, and he pressed us to accept the Typos. Mindful of the Lord's judgment, we refused. God is my witness that neither I nor my disciple have ever said that the Emperor was playing the priest. What I did say, not to Anastasius, but to Gregory himself, was, 'It is not the task of rulers to investigate and define dogmas of the faith, but of ministers of the altar, who anoint the Emperor and lay hands upon him, offer the Bread of heaven, and perform the other lofty and divine Mysteries.' I said this then and stand by it now. Gregory remembers my words. If he denies hearing them, it is because he considers it advantageous to do so. This is the truth; judge me as you wish."

The prosecutors, having put all their hope in false witnesses, were uncertain how to proceed against Saint Maximus, so they led him away and brought in his disciple Anastasius. They attempted to cow him into confirming the slanderous charges and testifying that the blessed one had employed torture to force Pyrrhus to renounce Monothelitism. Anastasius was not intimidated, but boldly asserted that his teacher had done no harm to Pyrrhus and had treated him with particular respect; whereupon, they pummeled him upon the neck, face, and head. Unable to prevail over the truth by violence, they finally desisted and returned Anastasius to prison. Meanwhile, they devised fresh calumny, then brought back the saint and again endeavored to conquer the undefeatable one, asserting that he was an Origenist. The blessed one easily rebutted them by proclaiming Origen to be cut off from Christ and all Christians, and his followers to merit divine judgment. Next the prosecutors demanded that Maximus explain why he had separated himself from communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople, and questioned him about Pyrrhus. They also interrogated him on other points and proposed that he accept the imperial Typos as a perfect and most praiseworthy exposition of the faith. This the saint absolutely refused to do. They hurled various taunts at him, but fearing entanglement in their own snares, would not risk being trounced in debate.

Scurrying back to the Emperor, they testified to the invincible valor of the abba of Chrysopolis, saying, "No one can best Maximus in argumentation. It is doubtful that he can be made to agree with us, even if torture is employed."

The elder was returned to his dungeon, but not long afterwards, visitors arrived, hoping to intimidate him or at least sap his patience. They announced that the Patriarch had sent them, then asked the saint, "To which Church do you belong: to that of Byzantium, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, or Jerusalem? All these churches and the provinces under them are in concord. If you belong to the Catholic Church, you must enter into communion with us at once, lest you forge a new and strange pathway and fall into unexpected disaster."

The man of God wisely replied, "Christ the Lord acknowledges as Catholic that Church which maintains the true and saving confession of faith. He called Peter blessed for his correct confession of Him, upon which He built His Church. But tell me: on what basis have all the churches, as you say, entered into communion? If it is on a foundation of truth, I do not wish to be separated from them."

The messengers said, "No one has commissioned us to speak about this; nonetheless, we shall explain. We confess both two operations in Christ by reason of His distinct natures, and one operation because the two natures are united in one person."

"If you mean that the two operations have become one as a result of the union of two natures in one person, then besides those two operations you recognize a third, in which the human and divine are mingled," asserted the saint.

"No," replied the messengers. "We acknowledge the two operations, but speak of them as one in consequence of their being united."

"You are devising an ill-founded faith for yourselves, asserting that God can exist without being," said Maximus. "Combining the two operations on account of the linking of two natures in a single person, and dividing the one operation into two because of the distinction between the natures, you allow neither one nor two operations, for the duality is excluded by the union, and the union by the duality. These contrivances render the union of God and man in Christ ineffectual, or rather abolish it altogether, since they

posit activities proper to neither nature. An essence that is not manifested in its own operation has no being. This is why I will never agree with your interpretation of the faith. It is contrary to everything I have learned from the Holy Fathers. As regards my temporal fate, do with me as you please: you have power over my body." The messengers did not know how to answer the saint's arguments, so they merely assured him that if he did not submit, he would be anathematized and put to death. Meekly and humbly, the saint said, "May God's will be done in me, unto the glory of His holy name."

The messengers returned to the Patriarch and related everything. Thereupon, the Emperor took counsel with the Patriarch, like Pilate with the Jews of old, and exiled the saint to Bizye, a town in Thrace. They banished his disciple Anastasius to a dismal place on the border of the Empire, called Perveris in the language of the local barbarians, and sent the other disciple of the saint, Anastasius the former apocrisiarios of Rome and author of the *Life of Maximus*, to the Thracian city of Mesembria. It happened about the same time that the blessed Martin, Pope of Rome, arrived in Constantinople. After enduring much suffering, he was exiled to Cherson. Before Martin was sent away, Patriarch Paul of Constantinople died. Pyrrhus regained the patriarchal throne, but four months later he died as well. Pyrrhus was succeeded by Peter, an obstinate Monothelite.

After quite some time, three men of high rank, Theodosius, Bishop of Caesarea in Bithynia, and the patricians Paul and Theodosius, were sent by Constans and Patriarch Peter to win over the saint. They were joined by the Bishop of Bizye, and alternately flattered and threatened Maximus, testing his faith and posing various questions. They began by introducing themselves, then requested Maximus to sit down. Bishop Theodosius asked, "How are you faring, my lord Abba Maximus?"

"Exactly as God knew I would before the ages," replied the saint. "He foreordained the circumstances of my life, which is guarded by providence."

"How can that be?" objected Theodosius. "Did God foreknow and actually foreordain our deeds from eternity?"

The saint said, "He foreknew our thoughts, words, and deeds, which nevertheless remain within our power to control; and He

foreordained what befalls us. The latter is not subject to our control, but to the divine will."

"Explain more exactly what is in our power, and what is not," requested Bishop Theodosius.

"My lord, you know all this," answered Saint Maximus. "You only ask to try your servant."

The Bishop admitted, "Truly, I do not know. I wish to understand what we can control and what we cannot, and how God foresaw one and foreordained the other."

The venerable Maximus explained, "We do not directly control whether blessings will be showered upon us or chastisements will befall us, but our good and evil deeds most certainly depend on our will. It is not ours to choose whether we are in health or sickness, but we make determinations likely to lead to one or the other. Similarly, we cannot simply decide that we shall attain the kingdom of heaven or be plunged into the fire of Gehenna, but we can will to keep the commandments or transgress them."<sup>6</sup>

Then the Bishop asked, "Why do you insist on prolonging your exile and imprisonment?"

"I pray God that, castigating me by these sufferings, He may forgive my failure to keep His commandments," responded Maximus.

"Is it not true that many are tested by afflictions?" asked Theodosius.

"The saints are tried so that their secret virtues may be manifested to all, as in the case of Job and Joseph," said the saint. "Job was tempted, and demonstrated perseverance second to none, and Joseph underwent trials that revealed his chastity and abstinence, qualities of holy men. If God permitted the saints to suffer in this life, it was because He wished to see them vanquish the devil, the ancient serpent. In a sense, the patience of the saints was actually a result of their tribulations."

"Truly, you speak well and instructively," sighed Bishop Theodosius, "and I would be happy to converse with you at any

---

<sup>6</sup> The point being that even what God predestinated, He ordered with reference to our choices, which He foreknew (Tr.)

other time about such matters. My companions, the honored patricians, and I have come, however, a considerable distance to speak about something else. We have a proposal to make, and hope that you will agree to it and delight the whole world."

"What is it, my lord," asked the saint, "and who am I that my concurrence will please the whole world?"

The Bishop replied, "Since the Lord Jesus Christ is Truth itself, I will relate exactly what our master the Patriarch and the most devout Emperor told me and my lords, the illustrious patricians."

"Speak, my lord; I am listening," said Maximus.

"The Emperor and Patriarch want you to explain why you have cut yourself off from communion with the see of Constantinople," Theodosius said.

"In the sixth indiction of the last cycle,<sup>7</sup> Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria, published the Nine Chapters,<sup>8</sup> which were approved by the see of Constantinople," recounted the saint. "Soon the novelties proposed in that document were followed by others, overturning the definitions of holy councils. These innovations were devised by primates of the Church of Constantinople: Sergius, Pyrrhus, and Paul, as all the other churches know very well. This is the reason I, your servant, am not in communion with the throne of Constantinople. Let the offenses introduced by those men be rejected and the abettors deposed; then the way to salvation will be cleared, and you will walk the smooth path of the Gospel unhindered by heresy. When I see the Church of Constantinople as she was formerly, I shall enter into communion with her uncompelled, but as long as the scandal of heresy persists in her and her bishops are miscreants, no argument or persecution will win me over to your side."

Bishop Theodosius asked, "Precisely what evil in our confession prevents you from entering into communion with us?"

---

<sup>7</sup> The word "indiction" originally denoted a tax in kind imposed to meet specific needs, then a fifteen-year cycle of taxation, and finally each year within the fifteen-year cycle. Here it is used in the third sense. The Nine Chapters (see below) were published in the year 633 after the Nativity of Christ. (Tr.)

<sup>8</sup> The Nine Chapters introduced the heresy of Monoenergism, the assumption that Christ had a single energy or operation, implicit in Monophysitism. Monoenergism represented an attempt to reconcile Monophysitism and Orthodoxy, and was the immediate antecedent of Monothelitism. (Tr.)

The godly Maximus answered, "You say that the Saviour's divinity and humanity share a single operation, but the Holy Fathers teach that every distinct nature has its own distinct operation. It is not the Holy Trinity you confess, but a quaternity. Positing one operation of the Saviour's divinity and humanity, you allege that the Word assumed, not our flesh and that of the immaculate Virgin Theotokos, but flesh having the qualities of the divine nature. Verily, you gainsay the Trinity and invent a quaternity, because you deny that Christ had a true human nature and imagine that the nature formed in the Incarnation was actually co-essential with that of the Pre-eternal Word, as the Word is co-essential with the Father and the Spirit. Again, disavowing the two operations and asserting that Christ's divinity and humanity share a single will, you deprive the Lord of the ability to do good as God or man. Indeed, if a nature lacks its intrinsic operation, it is incapable of doing anything at all. Further, confessing that the incarnate Christ has two natures and one will, which is divine, you must say that His flesh, according to its will, created all the ages and everything that exists, with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, while itself having been created according to its nature. You make flesh beginningless according to its will (since the divine will, like the Godhead, can have neither beginning nor end), yet admit that, according to its nature, it was fashioned in time. This is senseless, or rather, completely godless. As for the Typos and the Emperor's laws, by forbidding mention of one will or two, or of the operations of Christ's natures, they deprive Christ the Lord of all the properties and manifestations that demonstrate His human nature and His divine nature. The Typos and the laws reflect your position well, for you overturn the notion of a single will and operation by insisting on their duality and you contradict the truth that there are two wills and operations by fusing them into one."

Hearing Saint Maximus say this and much else (which his disciple Anastasius relates in detail), his opponents began to realize their error. Nevertheless, the Bishop proposed, "Accept the Emperor's Typos not as an expression of dogma, but as his personal interpretation and a means of silencing controversy."

"If the Typos is not a dogmatic definition establishing that our Lord has a single will and operation, why have I been exiled to a

land of barbarians and pagans who do not know God?" asked Maximus. "Why do I waste away here, and my fellow-laborers in Perveris and Mesembria?"

Then the saint mentioned how the synod convened in Rome by the blessed Pope Martin had condemned the Monothelites, to which Bishop Theodosius responded, "It is the Emperor's summons that gives authority to a council."

"If that were so, the Orthodox faith would have long since come to an end," said Maximus. "Recall the councils summoned by imperial decree to proclaim that the Son of God is not of the same essence as God the Father. The first was held in Tyre, the second in Antioch, the third in Seleucia, the fourth in Constantinople under Eudoxius the Arian, the fifth in Nicaea, and the sixth in Sirmium. Considerably later, a seventh false council took place in Ephesus, at which Dioscorus presided. All these synods were convened by imperial decree, but were rejected and anathematized, since they endorsed godless doctrines. On what grounds, I would like to know, do you accept the council which condemned and anathematized Paul of Samosata? Gregory the Wonder-worker presided over that council, and its resolutions were confirmed by Dionysius, Pope of Rome, and Dionysius of Alexandria. No Emperor convoked it, but it is unassailable and irrefutable. The Orthodox Church recognizes as true and holy precisely those synods that proclaimed true dogmas. Your holiness knows that the canons require that local councils be held twice yearly in every Christian land for the defense of our saving faith and for administrative purposes; however, they say nothing about imperial decrees."

Both sides produced various arguments, but Saint Maximus spoke under the manifest influence of the Holy Spirit. The result of the lengthy discussion was that his eloquence and divine wisdom vanquished the adversaries, who sat for a long time hanging their heads and staring at the floor. Then, moved to contrition, they began to weep, after which they bowed before the saint, and he before them. They prayed with Maximus, fervently and joyfully accepted his Orthodox teaching, and promised that they would confess it and attempt to win over the Emperor. As evidence of their sincerity, they kissed the divine Gospel, the honored cross, and holy icons of the Saviour and the Theotokos. After

speaking for some time with the elder about various edifying topics, they exchanged a kiss in the Lord with him and bade him farewell. Upon return to Constantinople, Bishop Theodosius and the patricians told the Emperor everything, and the ruler became enraged. Fearing his wrath, all three men reverted to heresy. The patrician Paul was given orders to return to Bizye and bring the venerable Maximus to Constantinople, showing him every courtesy. The saint was assigned quarters in the Monastery of Saint Theodore.<sup>9</sup>

The next morning the patricians Epiphanius and Troilus were sent to the godly one by the Emperor. They were splendidly attired and accompanied by Bishop Theodosius and numerous noblemen, soldiers, and servants. Saint Maximus was hoping that the Bishop would bring word of how he had successfully fulfilled his promise to confess Orthodoxy and attempted to convert the Emperor. Instead, the blessed one learned that Theodosius had been false, preferring to please the earthly ruler rather than the King of heaven and His Holy Church. When the visitors were seated and had persuaded the venerable one to sit, Troilus began the conversation thus: "The Emperor, whom God has appointed master of the ends of the earth, has sent us to declare what he wishes you to do. Tell us whether you will obey."

Saint Maximus said, "Tell me first, my lord, what His Majesty wants, and I shall answer. How can I reply to a demand I have not heard?"

Troilus insisted, "You must assure us that you will submit; then we shall explain."

In view of Troilus' sharp, insistent demand and the angry glances of all the nobles, the man of God declared, "Since you are unwilling to tell your slave what our lord the Emperor seeks from me, I avow before God Himself, the holy angels, and you that if the ruler requires something of temporal and transitory significance, and it is not inimical to God and my soul's eternal salvation, I will gladly fulfill it."

At this Troilus stood up and blustered, "I am leaving. It is clear you have no intention of submitting."

---

<sup>9</sup> This monastery was located in the suburbs of the Imperial City. (Tr.)

An uproar ensued and Bishop Theodosius said, "Tell him what the Emperor wants and listen to his response. We must not leave without doing this."

The patrician Epiphanius declared, "Hear His Majesty's words: 'With you as their guide, schismatics throughout the East and West have risen up against us. They ever increase in number and incite disturbances; moreover, they have cut off communion with us. May the Lord soften your heart to share with us the Eucharist. If you accept our Typos, we shall receive you lovingly, escort you to church in honor, and seat you at our side, in the place reserved for rulers. Together, we shall partake of the immaculate, life-giving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. We shall proclaim you to be our father, and there will be great joy, not only in our Christ-loving city, but throughout the world. When you enter into communion with the holy Church of Constantinople, all who have cut us off because of your teaching will be united with us. Of this we are certain.' "

With tears in his eyes, holy Abba Maximus sighed to Bishop Theodosius, "We all await the great day of judgment, Master. Have you forgotten what you promised before the divine Gospel, the life-giving Cross, and the sacred icons of our Saviour Jesus Christ and His most pure Mother, the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary?"

Hanging his head, the Bishop muttered with a broken voice, "What could I do? The most devout Emperor had already reached a conclusion on the matter in question."

Abba Maximus pressed him, saying, "Why did you and your companions put your hands on the Holy Gospel, if you did not have a firm intention of fulfilling your vow? Truly, all the hosts of heaven cannot persuade me to do what you propose. I would have to answer, not only to God, but to my conscience, if I were to reject the true and saving faith for the sake of empty glory and the adulation of men, which are valueless."

The Emperor's lackeys sprang to their feet in a rage, threw themselves upon our father, and rained blows and insults upon him. They dragged, kicked, and trampled the saint, and would have made an end of him, had not Bishop Theodosius restrained them. When they had ceased beating and tearing at the man of

God, they covered him with spit. Maximus dripped with their stinking spittle from head to toe, and his clothes were drenched.

The Bishop told the others, "That was uncalled-for. You should have left as soon as he replied, and reported to the Emperor. The canons do not sanction such abuse." With difficulty Theodosius calmed them somewhat and persuaded them to sit down, although they continued to hurl the crudest insults at the saint.

Shortly afterwards, the patrician Epiphanius began angrily berating the elder. "Tell us, wicked graybeard, possessed of a demon: why do you consider the Emperor and the citizens of the capital heretics? We are more Christian than you, and more Orthodox," he raved. "In Christ Jesus our Lord we recognize a divine and a human will and a rational soul. Operative ability is intrinsic to sentient being, just as will is to mind, and every rational nature possesses a power of willing and a capacity for operation corresponding to itself. We acknowledge that the Lord has the power to will according to His divinity and His humanity and do not deny that He has two wills and operations."

"If you believe as befits the sane and as God's Church teaches, then why do you attempt to compel me to accept the Typos, which forbids any affirmation of what you now purport to hold?" asked Saint Maximus.

Epiphanius replied, "The Typos was written to put an end to controversy about matters that are not entirely comprehensible and to protect the people from erring in respect to what they little understand."

"The Typos is opposed to a correct confession of the faith, by which every person is sanctified," insisted Abba Maximus.

Then the patrician Troilus interjected, "The Typos does not deny the two wills in Christ, but merely orders that there be no discussion of them, for the sake of peace."

"To suppress confession of the faith is to deny it," retorted our father. "The Holy Spirit declares through the prophet, *There are no tongues nor words in which their voices are not heard*;<sup>10</sup> consequently, if a word is not uttered, it is not a word at all."

Troilus said, "Believe what you wish in your heart. No one cares what you think, as long as you do not stir up trouble."

---

<sup>10</sup> Ps. 18

“Our salvation does not depend merely on faith of the heart,” said Saint Maximus. “The Lord teaches, *Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father Which is in heaven.*”<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the divine Apostle tells us, *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*<sup>12</sup> If God and the prophets and apostles command that the mystery of faith which is the salvation of the whole world be confessed openly, then our salvation is hindered when its proclamation is forbidden.”

At this Epiphanius shouted angrily, “Did you sign the acts of the council held in Rome?”

“I did,” replied the saint.

“You dared to put your name on a document anathematizing the Catholic Church and every sound-minded person? We shall drag you through the streets and into the forum; bind you; and permit actors, whores, and the rabble to pummel you and spit in your face,” threatened Epiphanius.

“Let it be as you say,” agreed the saint, “if we anathematized those who confess two natures and two corresponding wills and operations in Christ our Lord, true God according to His divine nature, and true man according to His human nature. Read the acts of the synod held in Rome, my lord. All who signed them pronounced the anathema only on those who, like Arius and Apollinarius, recognize one will and operation in the Lord, and do not acknowledge Him as having a distinct operation and will for each of the two natures by which He brought to pass our salvation.”

“We shall starve or die of thirst if we let him go on,” grumbled the patricians and the others. “We should get some supper and tell the Emperor and Patriarch what we have heard. The knave has delivered himself to Satan.” With this, they rose and went to eat, although it was the eve of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross and the All-night Vigil was about to begin. After eating, they went back to the city.

The next morning, the patrician Theodosius returned to the venerable Maximus and announced in the Emperor’s name,

---

<sup>11</sup> Matt., ch. 10

<sup>12</sup> Rom., ch. 10

“Since you refuse to be honored, you shall be exiled again and treated in a way befitting your obstinacy.”

Theodosius delivered our father into the hands of soldiers, who took him to Selymbria, where he remained for two days. Meanwhile, a local recruit put about the army’s camp there slander that Maximus blasphemed the immaculate Theotokos. Word of this reached the townsfolk, inciting them against the saint. The recruit’s general summoned the most respected presbyters and deacons of Selymbria, and the most revered monks, and sent them to learn whether what was said about the blessed Maximus was true. The saint greeted the clergy and monks with a prostration, and they prostrated themselves in turn; then everyone sat. A respected elder asked the godly one, “Holy father, people say that you deny that our Lady, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, is the Mother of God. We beg you, in the name of the consubstantial Trinity, to tell us the truth and dispel our perplexity. We do not wish to condemn you unjustly.”

The godly one fell prostrate again, stretching out his arms to form a cross, then arose and lifted his hands to heaven. With tears in his eyes, he solemnly declared, “In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the co-essential and supersubstantial Trinity; of all the hosts of heaven; of the choir of holy apostles and prophets; of the innumerable array of martyrs; and of every righteous soul reposed in the faith: may he be anathema who fails to confess our all-hymned, all-holy, immaculate Lady, the most honorable of rational beings, as the true Mother of God, *Who hath made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein*,<sup>13</sup> now and ever and unto ages of ages.”

Hearing this, the monks and clergy wept. They blessed Saint Maximus, saying, “May God strengthen you, Father, and vouchsafe you to complete your course without stumbling.”

A large number of soldiers were gathering to hear the edifying conversation, and a member of the commander’s staff observed them listening to the saint and criticizing the government for exiling Maximus; so he ordered the elder taken away at once. Our father was led a mile further on the route to Perveris, where he

---

<sup>13</sup> Ps. 45

was to be banished. The clergy and monks, spurred by divine love, accompanied him. In the meantime, Maximus' guards prepared to resume the journey. When the guards were ready to depart, the clergymen and monks embraced the saint tearfully, lifted him onto a donkey, and bade him farewell, then returned to Selymbria. Upon arrival in Perveris, Saint Maximus was imprisoned.

Much time passed,<sup>14</sup> and the Emperor recalled the venerable Maximus and his two disciples to Constantinople. They sailed into city at sunset and were met by two officers and ten guards who removed them from the vessel half-naked and barefoot, and locked them in separate cells. Several days later the prisoners were taken to the palace. Both disciples were left outside under guard, but the elder was led in. The senate was in session and numerous high-ranking officials were there; the Emperor, however, was not. Saint Maximus was presented to the seated nobles. The first to speak was the gazophylax, who angrily demanded, "Are you a Christian?"

"I am, by the grace of the God of all," replied the elder.

"You lie!" shouted the treasurer.

The saint answered, "You may say that I am not a Christian, but God knows that I am and ever shall remain one."

"If you are a Christian, why do you hate the Emperor?" the treasurer continued.

"How can you say I hate the Emperor?" asked Maximus. "Hatred is a hidden feeling of the soul, as is love."

"It is obvious from your deeds that you are a foe of the Emperor and the Imperial City," insisted the gazophylax. "You alone have betrayed Egypt, Alexandria, Pentapolis, Tripolitania, and Africa to the Saracens."

Saint Maximus inquired, "What proof have you of this?"

Thereupon, the elder's enemies produced a man named John, who was *sakellarios* or comptroller for Peter, former Duke of Numidia. John asserted, "Twenty-two years ago, the grandfather of our lord the Emperor ordered the blessed Peter to lead his army into Egypt against the Saracens. Having absolute trust

---

<sup>14</sup> Five years (Tr.)

in you as God's servant, he wrote asking your advice. You replied that it was not pleasing to God that he assist Heraclius or his heirs."

The saint countered, "If you speak the truth and have Peter's letter to me and mine to him, show them and let them be read, so that I may be punished according to law."

"I do not have your letters and have never seen them," admitted John, "but everyone in camp was speaking about them."

If the whole army knew about them, why are you alone accusing me? Have you ever even seen me before, or I you?" asked the saint.

"Never," confessed John.

"Decide for yourselves whether it is just to accept such testimony," Maximus reproached the senators. "Remember the words spoken by God, the righteous Judge of all: *With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*"<sup>15</sup>

Next Sergius Magudas was brought in. He said, "Ten years ago, blessed Abba Thomas of Rome told me, 'Pope Theodore dispatched me to Gregory the Patrician, Exarch of Carthage and the Western lands, who had rebelled against the Greek Empire. He wanted me to assure Gregory not to fear attack by the Greeks, because, he said, God's servant Abba Maximus had seen in a dream a multitude of angels in the heavens, some in the east, exclaiming, Constantine Augustus, you shall conquer!<sup>16</sup>and some in the west, crying, Gregory Augustus, you shall conquer! and the sound of those in the west was stronger and clearer than of those in the east.' "

At this the treasurer gloated, "And now God has brought you to this city to be burned alive!"

"I thank God for cleansing my voluntary sins with involuntary sufferings," said Maximus; "nonetheless, *woe unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.*<sup>17</sup> It is shameful to vilify some-

---

<sup>15</sup> Matt., ch. 7

<sup>16</sup> Constantine Augustus: the Emperor Constans, who, as noted, was officially named Constantine (Tr.)

<sup>17</sup> Matt., ch. 18

one unjustly, as you have, and no less shameful to leave unpunished those who say such things to please mortals. You should have made your accusations while Gregory the Exarch was still alive. Then the patrician Peter, Duke of Numidia; Abba Thomas; and the blessed Pope Theodore could have been summoned. I would have asked Peter in the presence of all: 'Tell me, my lord, did you write me, as your sakellarios reports, or did I write you?' I would have inquired of the blessed Pope, 'Tell me, Master, did I ever relate one of my dreams to you?' But even if the Pope did say that I had communicated to him the dream, the guilt would have been his for directly encouraging rebellion, not mine. A dream is not a matter of the will, and certainly not punishable by law."

The prosecutors made other accusations against the blameless man of God, mostly that in Rome he and his disciples had censured the Emperor. Saint Maximus humbly continued to demonstrate his innocence, refuting every slander with wise and divinely inspired proofs. Then guards brought in his disciple Anastasius, and the interrogators tried to snare him into implicating his teacher in some crime. It soon became clear he would say nothing against the righteous one, so they beat him with their fists and led him away. He and our father were both returned to their cells.

The next evening the patrician Troilus and Sergius Euphrastes, steward of the imperial table, came to speak with the venerable one. After offering him something to eat, they asked, "Abba, what arguments did you employ in Africa and Rome to convince Pyrrhus to renounce his true dogmas and accept yours?"

The saint replied, "If I had the books in which I wrote down the details of our conversations and debates, I would tell you. They were taken from me, so I can only relate what I remember." He proceeded to recount as much as he could, concluding with these words: "I have no dogmas of my own, but only those held by the whole Catholic Church. My confession includes not a single word that can properly be called my invention."

"And you still refuse to enter into communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople?" they asked.

"Still," he answered.

They asked, "Why so?"

“Because the leaders of this Church have rejected the definitions of four holy councils and accepted the Nine Chapters published in Alexandria; the Ekthesis written by Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople; and the recently issued Typos. What they proclaimed as dogma in the Ekthesis they rejected in the Typos.<sup>18</sup> They have repeatedly excommunicated themselves from the Church and are completely unstable in the faith. Additionally, they have been cut off and stripped of priesthood by the local council held at Rome. What Mysteries, then, can they perform? And what spirit descends on those whom they ordain?”

“So then, you alone will be saved, and all others will perish?” the Emperor’s men objected.

The saint explained, “When the people in Babylon worshipped the golden idol, the Three Holy Youths condemned no one. Their concern was not for the doings of others, but that they themselves should not fall away from piety. When Daniel was cast into the lion’s den, he did not condemn those who, obeying Darius, failed to worship God, but kept in mind his own duty. He preferred to die rather than sin against conscience and transgress God’s law. God forbid that I should judge anyone or say that I alone will be saved! Nevertheless, I would rather die than violate my conscience by betraying the Orthodox faith in any particular.”

“And what will you do when the Romans unite with the Byzantines? Yesterday two papal legates arrived. Tomorrow is the Lord’s day, and they will partake of the immaculate Mysteries with the Patriarch,” they taunted him.

The godly one replied, “The whole world may enter into communion with the Patriarch, but I will not. The Apostle Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit anathematizes even angels who preach a new Gospel, that is, introduce novel teaching.”<sup>19</sup>

The nobles asked, “Is it really necessary to confess two wills and operations in Christ?”

“Absolutely,” insisted the saint, “if we are to hold steadfastly to Orthodox doctrine. Every nature has its corresponding opera-

---

<sup>18</sup> While the Typos did not condemn Monothelism, it ordered the text of the Ekthesis removed from the great church of Holy Wisdom, and as was earlier noted, forbade all discussion of Christ’s wills and energies. (Tr.)

<sup>19</sup> Gal., ch. 1

tion. The Holy Fathers clearly teach that it is by the operation that the nature is known to exist. Otherwise, how could we know Christ to be true God by nature and true man?"

The nobles were forced to admit, "We understand that this is indeed the truth; nevertheless, we must not put ourselves at odds with the Emperor. He issued the Typos, not to deny any property inherent to Christ, but to bring peace to the Church. This is why he commands that there be no discussion of things that give rise to differences of opinion."

Tears welled up in Maximus' eyes. Throwing himself to the ground, he cried, "I do not wish to grieve the Emperor, who is a good man and loves God; but still more, I fear to anger the Lord by keeping silence about what He commands us to confess. If, as the divine Apostle says, *God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers,*<sup>20</sup> then it is clear that the Lord speaks through them. All of Holy Scripture, the writings of the teachers of the Church, and the decisions of the councils proclaim that Christ Jesus, our incarnate Lord and God, has power to will and act according to both His divinity and His humanity. He lacks no property pertaining to the godhead or to human nature, except sin. If He is perfect in both natures and deficient in nothing proper to them, then it is evident that the mystery of the Incarnation is utterly distorted by anyone who fails to confess Him to have all of each nature's innate properties, by which and in which His natures are known."

After the saint had expounded this and many other points, the noblemen praised his wisdom and realized that it was impossible to refute him. Nevertheless, Sergius said, "Abba, there remains the primary point at issue: because of you many have broken communion with the Church of Byzantium."

Maximus objected, "Who can say that I have ordered anyone to break communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople?"

"The fact that you are not in communion with us turns many others away," replied Sergius.

"There is nothing more burdensome than to suffer the reproach of conscience," sighed the man of God, "and nothing more desirable than conscience's approval."

---

2

<sup>0</sup> I Cor., ch. 12

“Is it good that the Typos of our devout Emperor has been anathematized and is disdained throughout the West?” asked Troilus.

The saint answered, “May God forgive those who prompted our lord the Emperor to issue the Typos.”

“Who prompted him?” demanded Sergius.

“The primates of the churches prompted him, and the nobles gave their consent, thrusting responsibility for their impiety upon our blameless ruler, who is a stranger to all heresy,” asserted the venerable one. “Advise His Majesty to do as his grandfather Heraclius of blessed memory. Learning that many fathers refused to accept the Ekthesis and condemned the heresy therein, he cleared himself of responsibility for it by sending letters to all the churches, explaining that the Ekthesis was not in fact his, but that of Patriarch Sergius. Constans should emulate him and thereby exonerate himself.”

Troilus and Sergius shook their heads and remained silent for a long time. Then they mumbled, “It is inconvenient, or rather, impossible to follow your counsel, Abba.” They continued to converse with our father for quite some time and departed on friendly terms with him.

A week later, on a Saturday, the saint and both his disciples were taken to the palace for further questioning. Anastasius the former legate of the Roman Church was left outside while the other Anastasius was presented to the senate and two patriarchs, Thomas of Constantinople and another.<sup>21</sup> Immediately, Maximus’ enemies began spewing out slander, which they demanded Anastasius confirm. He fearlessly refuted every charge made by the senators. Then they asked whether he had anathematized the Typos, and he replied, “Not only did I anathematize it: I wrote a book against it as well.”

“Do you acknowledge that you have erred?” they asked.

“God forbid that I should say I have done wrong when I have done well, upholding the canons of the Church,” answered Anastasius.

---

<sup>21</sup> Actually, the Patriarch of Constantinople at that time was named Peter. The other patriarch was Macarius of Antioch. (Tr.)

With the Lord's help Anastasius responded wisely to all their questions, so they drove him out and brought in the holy elder Maximus. Troilus addressed our father thus: "Speak the truth, Abba, and God will be merciful to you. We shall interrogate you in accordance with the law. If even one of the charges against you holds good, you may be executed."

The elder replied, "I told you before and tell you again that the charges are false. It is as impossible for you to prove one of your accusations as it is for Satan to become God. Satan is an apostate and can never become God, and the accusations are completely false and can never become true. Nonetheless, have it as you wish. I worship God with all sincerity and do not fear you."

"Did you anathematize the Typos?" asked Troilus.

"I have confirmed several times that I did," answered the elder.

"If you anathematized the Typos, it follows that you anathematized the Emperor," asserted Troilus.

"I did not anathematize the Emperor, but only a scrap of parchment which overthrows the Orthodox teaching of the Church," explained the godly one.

"Where did you anathematize it?" Troilus demanded.

Saint Maximus replied, "At the local council in Rome which took place in the Church of the Saviour and the Theotokos."

Then the Prefect asked, "Will you enter into communion with our Church, or not?"

"I will not," said the saint.

"Why?" asked the Eparch.

"Because it has rejected the rulings of Orthodox councils," said Maximus.

The Eparch continued, "If that be so, how is it that the fathers of those councils remain in the diptychs of our Church?"<sup>22</sup>

"How do you profit by commemorating them, when you renounce their doctrines?" countered the saint.

The Prefect asked, "Can you prove that our Church rejects the dogmas of the holy synods?"

---

<sup>22</sup> The diptychs were lists of the living and the dead commemorated at the anaphora by a local Church. (Tr.)

"If you wish me to, and you remain calm," said the elder, "I can do so easily."

There was a pause and silence; then the imperial treasurer asked our father, "Why are you so fond of the Romans, but hate the Greeks?"

"God commands us to hate no one," said the saint. "I love the Romans because they hold the same faith as I, and I love the Greeks because we speak the same language."

"How old are you?" inquired the treasurer.

"Seventy-five," answered Maximus.

The treasurer asked, "How many years has your disciple been with you?"

The elder said, "Thirty-seven."

Suddenly one of the clergymen present shouted, "May God punish you for what you did to the blessed Pyrrhus!" Maximus made no reply.

The interrogation concluded with mention of the synod held in Rome. One of the saint's adversaries, Demosthenes, asserted, "That was not a true council, because Martin, who convened it, was deposed."

"Pope Martin was not deposed, but persecuted,"<sup>23</sup> said the man of God.

At no time during the examination did either patriarch say a word. When the questioning was completed, the senators sent out Maximus and deliberated what they would do to him. The inhuman persecutors decided it would be too kind merely to imprison or exile the saint again and thought it best to subject him to torments worse than death. They handed over our father and his disciple to the Eparch of the city; whereupon, the Prefect took them to the praetorium. Here the iniquitous torturer had the holy elder stripped naked and flogged with scorpions. He was not put to shame by Maximus' advanced age, saintly appearance, or emaciated body, wasted by ascetic labors. His servants covered the elder with stripes and the floor with blood; then the savage beast turned his attention to Maximus' disciples and ordered them given the same treatment. Meanwhile, a herald proclaimed, "Whoever

---

<sup>23</sup> That is, ecclesiastical sanctions against confessors of the faith are ineffectual, being a form of persecution (Tr.)

refuses to submit to the Emperor's decrees renders himself liable to similar punishments!" Afterwards, the half-dead prisoners were dragged back to their cells.

At dawn the venerable one, with his senior disciple, was again brought before the Prefect's judgment seat. The sight of the holy elder, ascetic, eloquent theologian, and confessor of the faith hardly breathing and covered with wounds seemed enough to incline the hardest heart to mercy, but the Eparch and his servants were already devising fresh punishments. They tore out Maximus' tongue at the very root, hoping to staunch the flow of divine teachings that was drowning heretical error and to reduce the elder to silence, then did the same to his disciple. After this they sent both men back to the dungeon. Their cruelty was gainless, however, since Christ the Lord, Who of old *perfected praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings*<sup>24</sup> and granted the dumb man speech<sup>25</sup> gave His true and faithful servants, the venerable Maximus the Confessor and martyr, and his disciple the godly Anastasius, the miraculous ability to converse more clearly than before. Discovering this, the wretched heretics were infuriated and pounded a knife through our father's wrist, severing his right hand, which they threw to the floor. In the same way they chopped off the hand of his disciple, Saint Anastasius. The other disciple, Anastasius the legate of the Roman Church, escaped the second day's punishments because he had previously served as imperial notary.

After this grisly business was finished, the Eparch's servants dragged Saint Maximus and his disciple out of the praetorium and through the markets, abusing them and displaying their tongues and hands to the mob. When they had tired of ridiculing and tormenting the sufferers and of clamoring at the top of their voices, the Prefect's lackeys sent the three prisoners to separate places of exile, barefoot and almost naked, and without food or anyone to care for them. On the road Saint Maximus and the others endured many hardships and additional mistreatment. The venerable one was in such sorry condition that he could neither ride an ass nor endure the jolting of a wagon; therefore, the soldiers carried him in a basket. Even so, the elder was in agony

---

2

<sup>4</sup> Ps. 8; Matt., ch. 21

<sup>25</sup> Mark, ch. 9

throughout the journey. He was taken to a region called Alania in the European part of Scythia and imprisoned in the town of Skemarum. The holy soul of his much-suffering disciple Anastasius departed from his battered body while he was still travelling and ascended to God and the realm of life everlasting.

The venerable Maximus lived for three years in his final place of exile, enduring severe afflictions. He was confined to a dungeon where he was brutally handled and deprived of the care necessary in old age. Before delivering him from his sufferings and leading him out of prison to the heavenly and eternal kingdom of freedom and rejoicing, the Lord consoled him with a divine visitation and proclaimed to him the day and hour of his departure. The blessed passion-bearer was cheered, and although always ready to meet his end, began making special preparations for it. When the long-awaited moment came, he gladly surrendered his soul into the hand of Christ God, Whom He loved from his youth and for Whose sake he had suffered greatly.

Thus did Christ's confessor and martyr depart this life and *enter into the joy of the Lord*.<sup>26</sup> After his burial in Skemarum, three candles appeared over his grave and burned miraculously, illuminating the whole area. They signified that the saint, who was a light to the world during his lifetime, continued to shine upon all in his repose. Indeed, to this day he remains a beacon for us and provides an example of virtue, long-suffering, and fiery zeal for the Lord. The fact that three candles were seen indicates that the favorite of the Holy Trinity had taken up his abode in the radiant dwellings of the kingdom of God, where the righteous blaze like the sun and exult in the vision of Triune light.

Anastasius the apocrisiarios survived the venerable Maximus and wrote a very lengthy Life describing the labors and sufferings of his father and teacher. We have abbreviated his account, retaining what suffices for our edification, to the glory of our God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, wondrous in the saints. Unto Him be praise, honor, and worship from us sinners, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

---

<sup>26</sup> Matt., ch. 25