

# St. John Chrysostom: ‘Golden-Mouthed’

2014 BYZANTINE SPIRITUALITY CONFERENCE SPEAKERS PRESENT SPECTRUM OF REVERED CHURCH FATHER’S WORKS, TEACHINGS

by Sister Marion Dobos, OSB

A reading of one homily of this 4th century Doctor of the Church reveals the reason he is called “Chrysostom.” *Chrysostom*

is the Greek word for “golden mouth.” Whatever the event, people flocked to hear this great writer and eloquent preacher. His homilies had an immediacy, which captivated and converted crowds.

On October 4, 2014 the Office of Religious Education sponsored the annual Byzantine Spirituality Conference at St. John the Baptist Cathedral Center in Munhall, Pa. This event provided catechists and faithful of the Archeparchy an opportunity to glean from this great saint.

In the spirit and inspired tradition of our revered ‘golden-mouthed’ forefather, three gifted speakers serving the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh (pictured above, left to right) — Very Rev. Robert M. Pipta, rector of SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary in Pittsburgh; Very Rev. Elias L. Rafaj, pastor of St. John Chrysostom Church in Houston, Texas; and Rev. Valerian Michlik, pastor of St. Gregory Church, Upper St. Clair, Pa. — enriched the participants with their presentations which highlighted the following qualities of St. John Chrysostom:

- He used simple everyday examples instead of abstractions on how families can truly live a Christian life.
- He taught that fervent prayer is expected of everyone and the Divine Liturgy is an opportunity to deepen one’s intimacy with God.
- He was so steeped in Scripture that he easily saw connections with contemporary life, especially in areas of charity, peace and justice.



- He tried to live the Gospel himself, never asking anyone to practice what he himself was not doing.

- He used the best of secular education to hone the skills he applied in ministry.

Not bad from a distance of 1600 years!

The day ended with table discussion followed by Vespers. For those who were unable to attend this spiritually enriching conference, following are the table discussion questions to answer for a personal reflection on the life of this great saint.

Saint John Chrysostom’s life was marked by faithfully following the Gospel. Give some examples of how we can encourage Gospel living in young people today:

*What word, phrase or sentence from the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom speaks to your heart today?*

*If you were to meet St. John Chrysostom this evening, what would you ask him?*

*The last words of St. John Chrysostom were “Glory be to God for all things.” What enables you to find God in your life?*

Sincere thanks to all who supported and participated in this and all of the enlightening programs sponsored by the Office of Religious Education. ■

