

SAINT MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR

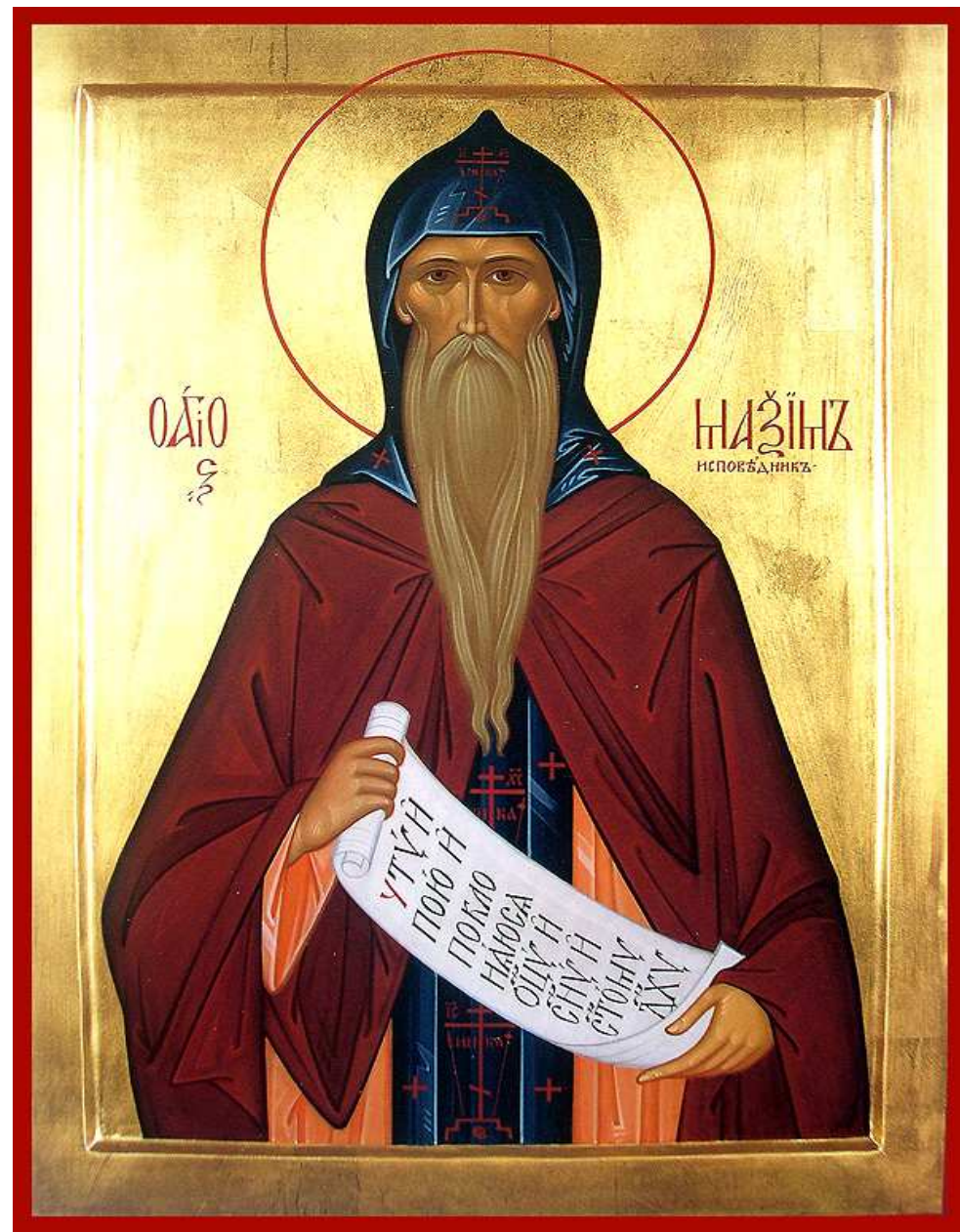
St. Maximus was born in Constantinople around 580 and raised in a pious Christian family. He was well-read and mastered philosophy, grammar, rhetoric and theology. He entered government service and became secretary and chief counselor to the emperor Heraclius (611-641), who was impressed by his knowledge and virtuous life.

St. Maximus realized the emperor and many others had been corrupted by the Monothelite heresy, which was spreading rapidly through the East. He resigned his duties at court and entered monastic life. In 638, the emperor and the Patriarch Sergius tried to minimize the differences in belief and issued an edict, the “Ekthesis,” which decreed that everyone must accept the teaching of one will in the two natures of the Savior. In defending Orthodoxy against the “Ekthesis,” Saint Maximus spoke to people in various occupations and positions; and these conversations were successful. Not only the clergy and the bishops, but the people and the secular officials felt some sort of attraction to him.

When St. Maximus saw the turmoil caused by the heresy in Constantinople and in the East, he decided to leave his monastery and seek refuge in the West, where Monothelism had been completely rejected. On the way, he visited the bishops of Africa, strengthening them in Orthodoxy and encouraging them not to be deceived by the cunning arguments of the heretics.

St. Maximus spent many years in Alexandria, Crete, and the Carthage areas, defending Orthodoxy against the heretics. In 648, a new edict was issued by a council of bishops, condemning Monothelitism as heresy. But Heraclius’ grandson now occupied the throne and was a Monothelite. He arrested Saint Maximus for treason, tortured him, cut off his right hand and exiled him. St. Maximus died in exile on August 13, 662.

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***HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
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THE TRINITARIAN

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Divine Liturgy on Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Vespers on Saturdays at 5:00 p.m.

BULLETIN 12 - VOLUME LXI

TONE 8

JANUARY 21, 2024

THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Ven. Maximus the Confessor;

*Martyrs Neophytus of Nicæa; Martyrs Eugene, Cadnius, Valerian, and Aquila, at Trebizond;
Virgin Martyr Agnes of Rome; Martyr Anastasius, Disciple of Ven. Maximus the Confessor;*

Ven. Neophytus of Vatopedi; Ven. Maxim the Greek;

The "Joy and Consolation" Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos at Vatopedi Monastery

Champion of Orthodoxy, teacher of purity and of true worship, enlightener of the universe and adornment of hierarchs: all-wise father Maximus, your teachings have gleamed with light upon all things. Intercede before Christ God to save our souls. Troparion, Tone VIII

Your holy martyr Neophytus, O Lord, through his suffering has received an incorruptible crown from You, our God. For having Your strength, he laid low his adversaries, and shattered the boldness of demons. Through his intercessions, save our souls! Troparion, Tone IV

Your lamb Agnes, calls out to You, O Jesus, in a loud voice: "I love You, my Bridegroom, and in seeking You, I endure suffering. In baptism I was crucified so that I might live with You. Accept me as a pure sacrifice, for I have offered myself in love." Through her prayers, save our souls, since You are merciful. Troparion, Tone IV

TODAY'S EPISTLE: COLOSSIANS 1:12-18

TODAY'S GOSPEL: MATTHEW 22:1-14

HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

Today, January 21

Prayers and installation of HTOC Parish Council

6:00 p.m. Prayers for the Unborn at St. Paul Church in North Royalton

Saturday, January 27

11:00 a.m. Baptism of Tyler Pask

5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

WELCOME GUESTS!

We are very glad you have come to worship the Holy Trinity with us this morning! Please participate in the services at your comfort level. Our greeters will kindly assist you with whatever questions or needs you may have. During each Sunday service we offer Holy Communion. If you are a practicing Orthodox Christian and have come prepared to receive Christ's Body and Blood through fasting and prayer, please come forward to partake. All guests are invited to come forward at the end of the service to greet Fr. Christopher and receive the blessed bread. Please stay after the Divine Liturgy for coffee hour in the Fellowship Hall so we can get to know you better!

Families with children: we encourage children of all ages to be present and participate as they are able during worship. We know sometimes kids need a break, so please take good advantage of our Rest and Refocus Room located on the south side of the lobby/narthex when coming in the main entrance. If you have pre-school and school age children, we invite you to send them to Church School directly after the Divine Liturgy throughout the academic year. May God bless you!

Daily Scripture Readings can be found in the St. Tikhon's Wall Calendar or at www.oca.org/readings.

COMING EVENTS

JANUARY:

21, TODAY	11:00 a.m. Parish Council meeting 6:00 p.m. Prayers for the Unborn at St. Paul Church; N. Royalton
25, Thursday	7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
27, Saturday	11:00 a.m. Baptism of Tyler Pask
28, Sunday	5:30 p.m. Celebration for Fr. Andrew Clements
29, Monday	Cooking for St. Herman's House
31, Wednesday	Serving dinner at St. Herman's House

<p><u>HOME BLESSINGS:</u> 2024 Theophany Home Blessings continue. There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall, as well as an online Sign-Up Genius link, which has been emailed.</p> <p><u>ENVELOPES:</u> Offering envelopes are available in the vestibule.</p> <p><u>TIME, TALENT, TREASURE:</u> If you did not already receive a Time, Talent, Treasure form for 2024, these forms are also available on the table in the vestibule. Please fill one out and return to the designated box by January 28.</p> <p><u>PRAY FOR THE UNBORN:</u> ZOE for Life offers a prayer service for the unborn children and a presentation by Fr. Costas Keares this evening, 6:00 p.m., at St. Paul Church; 4548 Wallings Rd. in N. Royalton. See details on the bulletin board.</p> <p><u>TRINITARIAN COVERS:</u> A sign-up sheet is in the Fellowship Hall if you would like to donate covers (\$10) in 2024 to help offset our printing costs.</p>	<p><u>IN SEARCH OF SEAMSTRESSES:</u> Some of our altar servers robes are in need of minor mending. If you are able to assist in this project, please see Protodeacon Anthony.</p> <p><u>PRAYER LIST:</u> If you have a request for prayers, contact Mimi Matheis at mamatheis22@gmail.com or 440-886-6945. The list is typically published on Sunday afternoons. If you are interested in receiving the Prayer List electronically, please email Mimi to be added to the distribution list.</p> <p><u>BAPTISM:</u> Nathan Seese will be baptized on Saturday, February 3, at 11:00 a.m.</p> <p><u>COFFEE HOUR:</u> The refreshments today are hosted by the Garklavs Family.</p> <p><u>FLOWERS:</u> The flowers today are offered by Jewelann Stefanar in blessed memory of Andrew and Julia Yankovich.</p>
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“Lo, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward,” as the Psalmist says (Psalm 126:3). We are called to recognize every human life, from conception to natural death, as a gift of the Lord. This means protecting the unborn, but in a broader sense this means helping our broken society and broken world to view our fellow human beings not as mere mouths to feed or potential threats or problems to be solved or subjects to be controlled, but as blessings from above. The unborn are a blessing; children are a blessing; the elderly are a blessing; the difficult people in our lives are a blessing; even our enemies — perhaps especially our enemies — are a blessing.”

From the Sanctity of Life Sunday Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon

GIFTS WE OFFER TO THE LORD WE LOVE

	12/31	1/7	1/14
REGULAR COLLECTION	\$ 1297.00	\$ 2402.00	\$ 4182.00
CHURCH ADMINISTRATION ASSESSMENT	300.00	600.00	1070.00
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUNDS	758.00	490.00	
CANDLES	181.00	225.00	116.00
ALTAR CROSS		2000.00	
IN MEMORY OF OLGA LOBAS		325.00	165.00
HOME BLESSING			70.00
COFFEE HOUR, 12/31, 1/7		177.00	50.00

GOD’S WORK IN ST. PAUL, AND US

12 And I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because he has considered me faithful and has appointed me to this ministry, 13 even though I used to be a blasphemer, a persecutor, and disrespectful. Nevertheless, I obtained mercy because I did those things in ignorance and unbelief; 14 and so the grace of our Lord overflowed onto me, along with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 1:12–14.

Often we want to justify ourselves. Show that we’ve actually always been in the right. We want to distance ourselves from our detractors. These days we can even greatly distance ourselves by blocking numbers on our phone, unfriending people who differ from us.

Paul certainly feels a need to make a distinction between himself and certain men who seem to be teaching something different than the pure gospel of Christ, teaching the gospel + _____ (e.g. circumcision, genealogies/pedigree, etc.)

However, having listed a great number of sins against God’s law, and having seemingly put himself on a pedestal because he had been entrusted even with the gospel of God, Paul proceeds with humility and thankfulness to God for his mercy.

“Even though I used to be a blasphemer, persecutor, and disrespectful,” he “enabled me,” he “considered me faithful,” he “appointed me to ministry”. Paul does not set himself apart from sinners, but he identifies as one. And he still marvels that Christ would have called him from one who spoke out against God’s ways and even persecuted and killed Christians, to becoming one who was given power by God to do God’s work in this world.

We can often look at Paul as an amazing almost superhuman missionary force, having written so many books of the New Testament, traveled across the known world to proclaim the Gospel and establish churches, persecuted, slandered, and martyred; but we might forget such a great transformation and that Paul also wrestled with this great weight of sin. And he knew that his battle with sin in his life was not over, but ongoing in this life. He needed God and others to reveal sin and drive him to deeper repentance.

Despite this weight, despite levels of shame, he was driven to do God’s work. God’s work was made powerful in his weakness (2 Cor 12:9). God wanted to use this man whose heart had turned to thanksgiving, humility, and repentance. God’s grace overflowed. And Paul’s testimony reminds us that God has a desire to pour out his grace and do such great things in us as well when we come to him in a similar manner.

St John Chrysostom says, “For not only has God released us from the impending punishment, but He has made us “righteous” too, and “sons,” and “brethren,” and “heirs,” and “joint-heirs.” Therefore it is, he says, that “grace was exceeding abundant.” For the gifts bestowed were beyond mercy, since they are not such as would come of mercy only, but of affection and excessive love.” Overflowing grace and love!

We have this life for repentance, and for turning to God in humility with thankfulness. God’s desire to work in us is not reserved for a future point when we’ve made it, when we’ve perfected some level of repentance. He wants to use us even now and show his strength in our weakness. So don’t wait! Let that happen today! Look for opportunities to be members of God’s active body in the world. Yes, God may show his strength in us more fully as we grow in him, but even now through his exceeding abundant grace and love for mankind, he wants us to be channels of that grace and love to those around us. These verses are for our rejoicing and marveling.

Fr. Chris