

# “A Great Cloud of Witnesses”

A Historical Series of the Murals on the Walls of Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Church

## Saint John Chrysostom

*Fifth Century Constantinople*



St. John was born in Antioch, Syria, around the year 350 A.D. His father died when he was young, and he was raised by his 20-year old mother. While his family was not Christian, his mother instructed him in virtue, and sent him to the best schools of Antioch.

One day St. John met the local Christian bishop, and was so captivated by the character of this man that he devoted himself to the religious

life. He was baptized and he joined a society that lived simply and studied the Bible.

After a couple years, St. John became a hermit, but his life was so severe that he became ill and prudently decided to return to Antioch to regain his health.

St. John was soon ordained a deacon and then later a priest. His chief task the next twelve years was preaching, but he also wrote many books and commentaries on the Bible. His fame spread and he was named Bishop of Constantinople (present-day Istanbul, Turkey). This diocese had many problems, so St. John began by reforming the life of the clergy. He next turned his attention to his flock, frequently preaching against the unreasonable extravagances of the rich. This upset many people, especially in the court of the Emperor, but the majority of the people were delighted with his preaching and often applauded him in church. St. John at first had a good relationship with the royal court, but soon the Empress grew cool towards him.

Political and spiritual rivals also arose who plotted with the Empress against St. John. Their chance came when St. John preached against the vain luxury of women; the Empress took this personally and demanded an apology. St. John refused and was exiled. Yet the people rallied around him, and he was reinstated. Soon he was exiled again, and this time was forced to leave the city and live in a remote corner of the empire. The pope heard about this and ordered his return, but to no avail. Instead, St. John was taken to the furthest edge of the empire, and during this harsh journey, he died in the year 407 A.D. St. John was named “Chrysostom” which means “golden-mouthed” because of his preaching. He is a Doctor of the Church, and is considered one of the greatest Christian preachers ever. He is the patron saint of exiles and preachers. **His Feast day is September 13.**

This series will feature the murals painted on the walls of Holy Comforter-Saint Cyprian Church along with history and commentary. You can also find this series on our website at [www.hcscchurch.org](http://www.hcscchurch.org).  
*Historical commentary researched and prepared by Anthony Lickteig (Seminarian).*