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John Chrysostom as pastoral authority

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Abstract

John Chrysostom was a pastoral authority, his sermons and his deeds were always connected to, or answered the challenges of his community or of himself, either religious, political, social or behavioral ones. John Chrysostom remains a model for present and future clerics not only from a rhetorical or moral point of view but also from the standpoint of his determination in promptly and adequately answering to the problems he encountered, arduously desiring a reformation of his society according to the will of Christ.

Keywords

St. John Chrysostom, sermons, community

When speaking about St. John Chrysostom as pastoral authority, we come across two main approaches: the first one, which focuses on John's treatise *On the Priesthood*, the second one dealing with his impressive and polyvalent activity as pastor of the Antiochian community and later of the Constantinopolitan one. The present study tries to approach the subject from a different angle, analyzing John as pastoral authority in terms of *adequacy*, that is, by pointing out the fact that his sermons and his deeds were

always connected to or answers of the challenges faced by his community or by himself, either religious, political, social or behavioral ones. John Chrysostom remains a model for present and future clerics not only from a rhetorical or moral point of view (his impressive sermons or his illustrious life¹), but also from the standpoint of his determination in promptly and adequately answering to the problems he encountered, arduously desiring a reformation of his society according to the will of Christ, Whose servant he was.

It is exactly this aspect of John Chrysostom's pastoral activity that is metaphorically evoked in the *proemium* of the *Oratio funebris*, a rhetorical funeral sermon from the beginning of the fifth century, whose authorship is still debated². The speaker imagined here how John Chrysostom was received by the great figures that inhabit the Kingdom of Heaven, in the next moments after his death:

“Great as is the dejection that grips our assembly, equally great I think is the pleasure that has seized the choir of the holy ones, each of whom has received the one whom he desired. Abel is consoled by seeing another Abel conspicuous for piety and for this reason attacked out of envy and struck down by a brother's right hand (Genesis 4, 1-16). Abraham draws to himself one who welcomes guests (Genesis 18, 1-10), and Isaac in turn draws the prudent one. Jacob summons the man without affectation (Gene-

¹ Won Sang Lee, *Pastoral Leadership: A Case Study, including Reference to John Chrysostom*, West Theological Monograph Series, Wipf & Stock, Eugene, Oregon, 2015, p. 101: “The overwhelming praise and fame Chrysostom received from the people in Antioch was due to his brilliant skills in communicating the Word, and also to his personal integrity”. Or, as Donald Attwater said: “Its potential effectiveness owed much to its direct practicality and solid thought that lay behind it, but its actual success was due to Chrysostom as a man of God, to the holy personality of one who was ever trying to practice what he preached, whose love and disinterested concern for the welfare of those whom he addressed was evident to all” (*St. John Chrysostom: Pastor and Preacher*, Harvill Press, 1959, p. 43).

² *Oratio funebris in laudem Sancti Iohannis Chrysostomi* (PG 47, coll. 43-52), Epitaffio tribuito a Martirio di Antiochia, edizione critica di Martin Wallraff, traduzione di Cristina Ricci, Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studisull'AltoMedioevo, Spoleto, 2007. There is also an English translation of this speech, *The Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom*, Translated with an introduction and commentary by Timothy D. Barnes and George Bevan, “Translated Texts for Historians”, Volume 60, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2013. The *proemium* quoted in this study is taken from this English translation, pp. 38-39.

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sis 25, 27), who has throughout his life been trained in every sort of affliction. Joseph enfolds in his arms one bound and sold by his brothers, who has endured the madness of Egyptians (Genesis 37, 12-36; 39, 7-23). Moses also has one who shares his zeal and is gentler than all men (Numbers 12, 3), one short of stature and <yet> sturdy in the greatness of his nature; and Aaron sees a high-priest who urged his people to be calm and was not persuaded to sin along with them. Nor does the blessed Job offer the place beside him in the choir to any other in preference to his just man (Job 1, 6-12); for he will recognize in him those struggles which they both had against the Devil and in which they overcame and gained from the Lord the same proclamation of victory. David too dances with the good shepherd who through the whole night and day scared the wild animals away from his rational flock (Samuel 16, 11, 19; 17, 34-37; Psalm 22, 1). Elijah kisses the zealous enemy of Jezebel, who for a long time resisted her attack on God (1 Kings 18-21); Elisha embraces the double Elijah, who, though he has not brought dead bodies back to life, has led the souls of men deadened by their sins back to life in Christ by the teaching of his word and of his life. The Baptist gazes on the bearer of his name, Peter on the bulwark of the church (Matthew 16, 18; Galatians 2, 9); Paul has received one with the same character, who was weak before the weaknesses of others (1 Corinthians 9, 22), who was inflamed at the scandals of his brothers, who carried around in his soul the care for churches throughout the world (2 Corinthians 11, 28-29), who was always dying, but never tasted death (2 Corinthians 6, 9); and the choir of the martyrs has received one who fought with them and with them won the crown. In short, all <the holy ones> have one of their own”.

Another funeral oration³ delivered just a few years earlier, this time by Saint Gregory of Nyssa, in honour of his deceased brother, Saint Basil the Great, is of major help for a better understanding of how great a pastoral authority John Chrysostom was. Comparing St. Basil the Great with St. Ap. Paul, Gregory of Nyssa says that, from the axiological point of view, they are of the same value and St. Paul is not greater than St. Basil due to the fact that the former precedes the latter in time:

³ *In laudem fratris Basilii* (PG 46, coll. 787-818).

“If we honor Paul who lived in the past and Basil who lived many generations later, you can say that God’s providence on our behalf is responsible and that both are not inferior in the order of virtue. For example, we have Moses, and much later Abraham; Samuel followed Moses and then Elias; next we have John [cf. Mt 11, 11], Paul and finally Basil (...). As the prophet says, he [God] knew all things before they came into existence [Dan 13, 43] and took into consideration the devil’s wickedness which took root in the human race. [God] offered a remedy for illness in each and every age so that men’s sickness might not go unhealed and that this remedy might not be absent by which he wishes to support the human race”⁴.

These “therapeutic” reasons in the succession of the saints in time annul any axiological differentiation between them. It is beyond any doubt that the missionary activity of St. Paul had a huge importance for the spreading of Christianity in the whole world (oi)koume/nh). By preaching the Gospel to the nations, the worshipping of idols was replaced by the worshipping of the unique and true God. But the devil, “the cunning inventor of evil” did not lack wicked devices in order to win again for himself those he lost by embracing Christian teaching. Thus, the devil invented heresy. Arianism, this idolatry disguised under the name of Christianity, was about to seduce the entire world and thus, to nullify Paul’s former activity. The divine providence gave then St. Basil, the teacher, whose theological activity showed the truth about the Son of God and brought people to the right path. The geographical spreading of Christianity, which was the work of St. Paul, is now enforced by the doctrinal clarification and explanation of it, which is the work of St. Basil, and both of them are activities of the divine providence and proper remedies for the diseases of each epoch in which they lived: the preaching of St. Paul is a “remedy” for idolatry, the teaching of St. Basil is a “remedy” for heresy.

According to this funeral oration quoted above, John Chrysostom was also a “providential remedy” for his communities whose pastor and preacher he was, first in Antioch and then in Constantinople. The disease he tried to heal was a complex one, a disease in which heretical elements

⁴ The English translation of this passage was taken from this web-site: <http://full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.ro/2013/12/an-encomium-to-st-basil-great-by-st.htm> , which was accessed on 17.04.2016, 13.00 hours p.m.

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were mixed up with civic insubordination, licentious language and behavior, fear in defending true religion, greed of money, love of power and others alike. As we said at the beginning of our study, what makes John Chrysostom great, among other aspects, is the adequate and prompt answer and reaction to this multi-facet disease.

The Antiochene period

In 386, when he was ordained to the priesthood by his bishop, Flavian, he was charged with preaching and giving religious instruction to the people. He immediately understood that his sermons should deal with the challenges his community was faced with, in order to preserve it safe and pure, uncontaminated with any doctrinal, moral, political or behavioral viruses. And the first virus he detected was the heresy of the Anomoeans and the propaganda they made in the city. These Anomoeans were radical Arians who taught that, so far from being “one in essence with – *homoousios* (*o(moou/sioj)*” or even “like – *homoiousios* (*o(moiou/sioj)*” the Father, the Word was wholly “unlike – *anomoios* (*a)no/moioj)*” Him. Therefore, the Son of God was not of divine essence, was inferior to the Father and a creature, a perfect one, but still a creature. The doctrine of the Anomoeans had been developed in the early 360s by the exquisite logician Eunomios into a rationalistic system of which the centre-piece was *the complete knowability of God*. The divine nature is completely knowable to man. Since “ingenerateness – *a) ge/nnhtoj)*” exhaustively defines God’s being, and since according to Eunomios’ theory of language words fully express the essence of the things they denote, man can have as complete a knowledge of God as He has of Himself. Since the essence of the Father is “ingenerateness” and the essence of the Son is “generateness (*ge/nnhtoj)*”, it follows equally that there can be no resemblance between the Father and the Son. The latter is not a partaker in the former’s essence; the former imparted to the latter not his divinity, but only his activity, thus making him the instrument for bringing other creatures into existence. The Son of God is not God at all.

In order to prevent the Anomoean contamination of his community, John Chrysostom delivers a five sermons series which came down to us as *De incomprehensibili Dei natura homiliae 1-5*, whose central theme

was the assertion of human understanding's limits and its inability to apprehend the essence of God. Man cannot apprehend the depths of his soul, so how could one dare to say that he knows the inner self of God? To the accusation of agnosticism ("Are you then ignorant of what you worship?") John replied with St. Paul's statement that we now "know in part" (1 Cor. 13, 9, 12) and by asserting that, even if we don't know the essence of God (only the Son of God, as God in Himself, has this essential knowledge), we, as humans, know that He exists, that He takes care of the world He created, that His Son, through Incarnation, mediates our knowledge of the Father.

This series of anti-Anomoean sermons begins, as Kelly⁵ says, on 2 September 386, which was a day of Sunday. Nevertheless, on the Wednesday following that Sunday, John felt constrained to interrupt these sermons because of a greater threat faced by his community: the autumn feasts of the Jewish community in Antioch. It was to come first the Feast of Trumpets, then the Day of Atonement ten days later, finally the week-long Feast of Tabernacles. Since the Jews from Antioch celebrated these feasts publicly, with great ostentation, and apparently welcoming outsiders, there was quite a significant number of Christians which would attend and enjoy them gladly. In order to determine those Christians not to take part in these feasts, John Chrysostom begins an eight sermons series *Adversus Iudaeos*. In the first one, he clearly says why he felt obliged to interrupt the sermons on the incomprehensibility of God's nature:

"Another very serious illness calls for any cure my words can bring, an illness which has become implanted in the body of the Church. We must first root this ailment out and then take thought for matters outside; we must first cure our own and then be concerned for others who are strangers. What is this disease? The festivals of the pitiful and miserable Jews [...] Some [of the Christians] are going to watch the festivals and others will join the Jews in keeping their feasts and observing their fasts. I wish to drive this perverse custom from the Church right now. My discourses against the Anomoeans can be put off to another time, and the postponement would cause no harm. But now that the Jewish festivals are close by and at the very door, if I should

⁵ J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth. The Story of John Chrysostom – Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1995, p. 62.

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fail to cure those who are sick with the Judaizing disease, I am afraid that, because of their ill-suited association and deep ignorance, some Christians may partake in the Jews' transgressions; once they have done so, I fear my discourses on these transgressions will be in vain. For if they hear no word from me today, they will then join the Jews in their fasts; once they have committed this sin, it will be useless for me to apply the remedy"⁶.

It is exactly the pastoral concern – which makes him a pastoral authority – that drives Chrysostom to take care of his community and, therefore, to interrupt a series of sermons he already commenced and to administer a prophylactic treatment for a more serious and imminent disease, until it's not too late. In medical terms and metaphorically speaking, when John sensed that his community was about to get sick of appendicitis, he was not so foolish as to overlook the danger or to administer a cure for... otitis. He was wise enough to determine the correct diagnosis and to choose the best treatment of the disease.

On 4 or 5 March – a Thursday or a Friday – there was a sudden riot in Antioch, due to a new tax imposed by the emperor Theodosius the Great⁷, a riot whose expression was the throwing down of the statues of the emperor Theodosius and Flacilla, his deceased wife, and the dragging of them through the streets of the city. This was equivalent to the crime of lese-majesty and the emperor was so exasperated, as even to think to destroy the city entirely. While Flavian, the bishop of Antioch, assumes the task of going to Constantinople in order to receive forgiveness for the members of his community, John Chrysostom stays among Antiochene Christians and tries to exploit this crisis situation in favour of the Christian cause. He delivers *ex tempore* 21 homilies⁸ to the frightened Christian flock, at one

⁶ Saint John Chrysostom, *Discourses against Judaizing Christians*, Translated by Paul W. Harkins, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1979, pp. 3-4.

⁷ As Zosimos (*Historia Nova*, 4.51.4) says, the cause of this great sedition was an exaction required either for the celebration of the fifth year upon which Arcadius, the son of Theodosius, had entered, from the time he was proclaimed under the title of Augustus, and the tenth year of the emperor Theodosius, commencing in the year 388, or for the expenses of the war against the tyrant Maximus, or on account of both these events, as well as for other necessities of the state.

⁸ The first, however, was preached before the outbreak of the insurrection. There is also a strong argument in favour of 22 homilies on the statues (see F. Van de Paverd, *St. John Chrysostom, the Homilies on the Statues. An Introduction*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 239, Rome, 1991).

time consoling the people who struggled with present distress, at another, strengthening their minds which were sinking under the extremity of danger, and above all, by repeated admonition, persuading them to correct the vices and to wipe away the crimes that had thus provoked God's wrath. A correction of the people's behavior – John Chrysostom would have said – would be in the best interest of the spiritual health of the Christian community. It is remarkable not only the pastoral concern for and the taking care of his frightened flock, but also his firm conviction that the bishop Flavian will know what to say to the emperor in order that the latter grant forgiveness to the Antiochenes, because it is God Himself Who will put the right words into Flavian's mouth and will soften the emperor's heart. The Christians of Antioch have nothing else to do but to correct their behavior, according to God's will and pleasure, and this correction would be a sign of gratitude for God's kindness. It is an essential element of pastoral authority to assert firmly and steadily one's faith in time of hardships and to keep together the flock when faced with extinction and death.

The Constantinopolitan period

On 26 September 397 the bishop of Constantinople, Nektarios, died unexpectedly. He was nominated bishop of the Eastern capital of the Empire in 381, by the emperor Theodosius the Great, after the resignation of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, while he was a layman, still unbaptized, fulfilling the task of city praetor⁹. This sudden death represented an unexpected promotion for the charismatic preacher of Antioch, John Chrysostom. He received an urgent summons from Asterios, count of the civil diocese of Oriens and governor of Antioch, to present himself immediately at the great martyrs' shrine outside the Romanesian gate. Having got there, he was driven to Pagrae in order to be sent to Constantinople, the governor being the one who gave him the astonishing news that he was being taken, on imperial orders, to the capital to become its new bishop. It is not our

⁹ J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, pp. 104-105: "Actually, it had been an astute choice, for Constantinople was then a predominantly Arian city, and while the emperor was determined to bring it round to the Nicene orthodoxy to which he was attached, he rightly judged that a popular, diplomatic figure like Nektarios was more likely to achieve this than a no-turning-back dogmatist".

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purpose here to inquire into the motives behind Jon's election¹⁰. Nevertheless, he was not so impressed by his new position as to give up his conception of how a priest should be or act. Therefore, in Constantinople John was consistent with his pastoral view he applied in Antioch as a priest: serving the law of God and trying to correct any slide-slip from it.

When he came into the capital, John discovered there a significant and aggressive Arian minority. Even if Theodosius the Great had ejected them from the churches of the city, they continued to hold regular services outside the walls. Kelly¹¹ informs us of the liturgical practices they performed on the eves of Sundays and of great feasts:

“Their practice was to assemble in public porticoes just within the gates and then chant Arian-slanted hymns antiphonally throughout the night. When dawn broke, they would process, still chanting their hymns, through the center of the city, march out through the gates, and then celebrate the liturgy at their customary meeting-places. As well as proclaiming the specifically Arian teachings, their hymns regularly caricatured or taunted the orthodox doctrine, one popular refrain provocatively asking: «Where are the people who declare the Three to be but one single power?»”.

As a good physician he was, John immediately set himself to find a proper cure for this disease he was familiar with from Antioch: the Arian

¹⁰ These motives were clearly suggested by Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p. 105. Here is the paragraph: “Socrates attributes John's selection to his renown as an eloquent teacher; according to Palladios, Eutropios had gained an insight into his character and abilities when visiting the east on state business. This has the ring of truth, especially if his visit took him to Antioch and he noticed that John was to all intents and purposes acting bishop there. It is also not impossible, as Baur suggested, that Caesarios, who had been one of the commissioners investigating the riot of 387, and who had recently been praetorian prefect and was now consul, had given a favorable report on John's performance during the crisis. Another suggestion meriting serious consideration is that, in its zeal for Nicene orthodoxy, the Theodosian house wanted more vigorous action against Arianism in the capital, and considered John the man for the job: so far from being suppressed, the Arian minority was in a distinctly militant mood. It is equally possible that the authorities were looking for a bishop who would collaborate with them in what was clearly one of their political objectives at this time, to consolidate and extend the authority of the imperial see. Any one or perhaps a combination of some, of these reasons may have been at work”.

¹¹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, p. 138.

disease. And while in Antioch he started a series of sermons against Arian doctrine, here, in Constantinople, the position he had as bishop of the capital and the support of the imperial family gave him new possibilities for a proper treatment. He organized rival nocturnal processions involving his own congregation, with antiphonal choirs intoning the dogmas of Nicaea. These processions were more elaborate and spectacular than the Arian ones, carrying silver crosses with blazing tapers fixed to them. At the same time, John had the enthusiastic support and participation of the empress Eudoxia, who also lent John a favourite chamberlain, the eunuch Brisson, a skilled musician, to train and lead the choirs.

In terms of pastoral adequacy, we may say that here, on this occasion, John found a formal “homoeopathic” cure: he fought against his enemies by using the same weapons they used. The Arians were furious at having their brilliant propaganda instrument copied, and were determined to exact their revenge. The rival processions clashed one night, a street battle broke out and there were casualties, a sufficient pretext for the government to ban all such public hymn-singing by the Arians. This decision was more than welcomed by the Nicene party and finally the disease was cured.

The entering of the Gothic general, Gainas, into Constantinople, with his army of some 35,000 troops, and the seizure of the capital, at the end of April 400 was another serious challenge John had to face. Gainas and his soldiers were Arians. Being now in control, he requested from the emperor that one of the city churches should be assigned to him and his Goths for Arian services, since it was unbecoming to his dignity, as a Roman officer of the highest rank, to be obliged to go outside the city walls, as the legislation of Theodosius the Great required of Arians.

At this request, the emperor Arcadius was inclined to give a positive answer, afraid of what Gainas might do if he were rejected. It was John Chrysostom who objected to this demand and courageously defied the Goth. The whole incident is reported by Sozomen and Theodoret¹². What

¹² Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 8, 4; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.32.2-8. Let us summarize the encounter by using the words of Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, pp. 157-158: “When Gainas repeated his demand, John, who was accompanied by several other bishops, retorted that the emperor, as an adherent of the true religion, could not act so sacrilegiously. In reply Gainas urged that he too, as a man of faith, needed a house of prayer. John’s rejoinder was that every church in the city was open to him. Gainas countered this by arguing that this was no use to him, since he belonged to a different denomination; his request for a place where he could worship was fully justified by

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is to be noted, however, in this event, is the courage and the notorious outspokenness (*parrhesi/a*) John displayed¹³. This feature of free speech is characteristic for a real preacher and pastor, no matter the consequences; its content is always the truth and its purpose is to correct, morally or doctrinally, the one to whom this outspokenness is addressed¹⁴. When using *parrhesia*, a Christian *parrhesiastes* always says the truth according to the divine law and, by doing this, there is always a risk or danger for him to suffer harmful consequences from the part of the addressee. Sometimes, there is even a risk of life. Nevertheless, the one who uses *parrhesia* knows that the truth must be said on any occasion and the divine law must not be overlooked in order to receive personal or institutional advantages or to preserve his life at any costs. *Parrhesia* is the key-element in the understanding of the Christian martyrdoms from the first centuries and implies a living relationship between the martyr and God, Who allowed pagans to kill Christians according to His mysterious providence. But as the psalmist says: “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 26/27). The one who believes that he is under the continuous providence of God and has a living relationship with Him will always speak with *parrhesia*

the long years of military service he had rendered to the Roman empire. With astonishing frankness John insisted that the rewards he had received greatly exceeded any labour he had expended. He reminded him that, when he had crossed the Danube to join the Roman army as a common soldier, he had been a rough-clad, penniless barbarian, whereas he was now commander-in-chief and had been deemed worthy of a consul's robe of office. He had sworn allegiance to Theodosius the Great, and was now guilty of great ingratitude when he sought to persuade Arkadios to violate his father's law banning the holding of heretical services in the city. At one point he turned to the emperor and, with a rhetorical flourish, exclaimed that it would be nobler to step down from his throne than to hand over the house of God to infidels". Apparently, John's intervention was successful and Gainas abjured his claim.

¹³ A similar outspokenness is recorded by St. Gregory of Nazianzus in his *Funeral Oration* for his friend, St. Basil the Great (*Oratio 43*, PG 36, 494-606); here, it is St. Basil himself who courageously faced and defied the prefect Modestus, who was sent by the Arian emperor, Valens, to convince Basil to renounce his adherence to the Nicene Creed.

¹⁴ See, for instance, Alberto Camerotto, “*Parrhesia*. Unaparola per i ‘Classicicontra’”, in *Atene e Roma*, vol. 6 (2012), pp. 51-63 and the bibliography cited there. For a thorough analysis of John Chrysostom's understanding of *parrhesia* see G. J. M. Bartelink, “*Parrhesiadans les oeuvres de Jean Chrysostome*”, in *Studia Patristica* 16 (1985), pp. 441-448.

and will never be afraid of the “secular” consequences. The Law of God must be observed at any costs.

On the other side, it is exactly this living relationship between a pastor and God that makes the pastor adequate to any situation, because God Himself works and speaks through him. In the Gospel of Mathew 10, 19-20 it is recorded that Jesus addressed to his disciples in these terms: “... do not worry about what to say or how to say it (...) you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you”. It is nonetheless true that, although having this conviction, John Chrysostom never invited a pastor and a preacher, before becoming pastor and preacher, to idleness, but to a systematic study of our Christian teaching. In his treatise *On the priesthood*, speaking of the need of being well instructed in the Holy Scripture and well equipped to all kinds of arguments, in order to prevail over an opponent in a debate, John Chrysostom says:

“When a dispute arises concerning matters of doctrine, and all take their weapons from the same Scriptures, of what weight will any one’s life be able to prove? What then will be the good of his many austerities, when after such painful exercises, any one from the priest’s great unskillfulness in argument fall into heresy, and be cut off from the body of the Church, a misfortune which I have myself seen many suffering. Of what profit then will his patience be to him? None; no more than there will be in a sound faith if the life is corrupt. Wherefore, for this reason more than for all others, it concerns him whose office it is to teach others, to be experienced in disputations of this kind. For though he himself stands safely, and is unhurt by the gainsayers, yet the simple multitude under his direction, when they see their leader defeated, and without any answer for the gainsayers, will be apt to lay the blame of his discomfiture not on his own weakness, but on the doctrines themselves, as though they were faulty; and so by reason of the inexperience of one, great numbers are brought to extreme ruin; for though they do not entirely go over to the adversary, yet they are forced to doubt about matters in which formerly they firmly believed, and those whom they used to approach with unswerving confidence, they are unable to hold to any longer steadfastly, but in consequence

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of their leader's defeat, so great a storm settles down upon their souls, that the mischief ends in their shipwreck altogether"¹⁵.

We could resume this in the subsequent monastic formula: *ora et labora* (pray and work), in order to get a clear conscience and purify your soul, on one side, and to be well instructed, on the other. These two exigencies will get you closer to God, even connected to Him and will make you a proper instrument of His will.

Finally, it is God who made John Chrysostom so great a pastoral authority. Nevertheless, it was not an arbitrary act of God, but an act of unanimity caused, at least partially, by Chrysostom's zeal, fervor and diligence for the Christian cause. In the 9th Homily on the Statues, St. John said to his congregation: "For I have no other life but you and the care of your salvation". We could say now that, from a certain point of view, Chrysostom's adequacy was, in fact, nothing else than the way in which God's providence is at work in any moment. We have given here only a few examples to prove our idea, but we could provide many others from John's pastoral activity which would confirm it. It is, nonetheless, our goal here to be exhaustive, but to be convincing. It is the task of the reader to decide if we have succeeded or not.

¹⁵ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. IX: Saint Chrysostom: *On the Priesthood, Ascetic Treatises, Select Homilies and Letters, Homilies on the Statues*, Edited by Philip Shaff, T&T Clark, electronic edition found on this web-site: file:///E:/hrisostom/SF.%20IOAN%20GURA%20DE%20AUR.On%20the%20Priesthood,%20Ascetic%20 Treatises,%20Select%20Homilies%20and%20Letters,%20Homilies%20 on%20the%20Stat/toc.htm#TopOfPage, accessed on 19.04.2016, 15.00 hours p.m.