

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

“JOY TO YOU, O CONFESSOR OF THE FAITH!”

When the age of persecution ended for the early church, the faithful believers had to deal with enemies from within their own ranks that were even more dangerous than the Romans!. While defining their doctrines and dogmas, the Holy Fathers of the Church were forced to endure bitter challenges to the Faith by heretics: proponents of false teachings. For centuries, a multitude of debates raged over what a Christian should believe concerning Christ, the Theotokos, and the Holy Trinity. One such heresy took hold in the 7th century: Monothelism. Briefly put, Monothelites said Christ had only one nature and therefore, only one will, refusing to accept the church’s position that our Lord was both **HUMAN AND DIVINE**.

Among those who were loyal to the teaching of the ‘Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church’ was our **HOLY FATHER MAXIMOS**, who spoke out with great conviction. This blessed Abbot boldly “confessed” his belief in the two natures and wills of Christ, even when many Church leaders were being swayed by the Monothelites. Even the Emperor and Patriarch were wavering in their beliefs!

Maximos suffered greatly for his strong desire to preserve what the early councils of the Church had proclaimed to be true. He was imprisoned, tortured, and finally exiled from his homeland. He died in 662 A. D., some twenty years before the Sixth Ecumenical Council formally condemned the Monothelites, putting to rest this unfortunate heresy. For his noble efforts, Maximos will forever be remembered by the Church.