



St. Maximos Kavso-kalyvites ("The Hut-burner") - Commemorated on January 13th

"Saint Maximus Kavso-kalyvites was educated at the church of the Most Holy Theotokos at Lampsakos. At seventeen years of age he left his parental home, became a monk, and passed his obedience under Elder Mark, the finest spiritual instructor in Macedonia. After the death of his teacher, the saint pursued asceticism under the guidance of several desert Fathers of extremely strict life. Arriving in Constantinople, St Maximus was constantly at the Blachernae church of the Most Holy Theotokos, as though he had taken up his abode at the entrance.

From his youth, St Maximus had a great love for the Mother of God. He persistently entreated Her to grant him the gift of unceasing mental prayer. One day, as he was venerating her icon, he felt a warmth and a flame enter his heart from the icon. It did not burn him, but he felt a certain sweetness and contrition within. From that time, his heart began to repeat the Jesus Prayer of itself. In this way, the Virgin Theotokos fulfilled his request.



The Most-Holy Theotokos and Christ appearing to St. Maximos (<http://agioritikesmnimes.pblogs.gr/files/f/197213-03.JPG>)

St Maximus fulfilled his obedience in the Lavra of St Athanasius on Mt. Athos. In order to conceal his ascetic deeds of fasting and prayer, and to avoid celebrity, he behaved like a fool. One day, he had a vision of the Mother of God, who told him to ascend the mountain. On the summit of the Holy Mountain, he prayed for three days and nights. Again, the Most Holy Theotokos appeared to him surrounded by angels, and holding Her divine Son in Her arms.

Prostrating himself, the saint heard the All-Holy Virgin speak to him, "Receive the gift against demons... and settle at the foot of Athos, for this is the will of My Son." She told him that he would ascend the heights of virtue, and become a teacher and guide for many. Then, since he had not eaten for several days, a heavenly bread was given to him. As soon as he put it in his mouth, he was surrounded by divine light, and he saw the Mother of God ascending into Heaven.



St. Maximus the Righteous burning his hut (taken from: <http://misha.pblogs.gr/2010/01/o-latinofronas-kakokindynos-kai-o-osios-maximos.html>)

St Maximus told his vision to a certain Elder living by the church of the holy Prophet Elias at Carmel. He was skeptical, but the saint turned his disbelief to good. He pretended to be slightly crazy in order to conceal his prodigious ascetic deeds, privations, his hardship and solitude. St Maximus did not live in a permanent abode, but wandered from place to place like a lunatic. Whenever he moved, he would burn his hut down. Therefore, he was called "Kavsokalyvites," or "Hut Burner."



St. Maximus building and burning his hut, from the Kyriakon of the Skete of the Holy Trinity, Kavsokalyvia (http://www.athosmemory.com/index.php?option=com_fotothiki&Itemid=75&func=detail&id=18820)

Those on the Holy Mountain, knowing of the extreme deprivations and sorrows of St Maximus, for a long time regarded him with contempt, even though he had attained the height and perfection of spiritual life. When St Gregory of Sinai (August 8) arrived on Athos, he encountered the holy fool.

After speaking to him, he began to call him an earthly angel. St Gregory persuaded St Maximus to stop behaving like a fool and to live in one place so that others might benefit from his spiritual experience. Heeding the words of St Gregory and the advice of other Elders, St Maximus selected a permanent dwelling in a cave near the renowned Elder Isaiah.

[For an excerpt from the conversation between St. Gregory and St. Maximos, see:

<http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2010/01/saint-maximus-kavsokalyvites-on-noetic.html>.]

Knowing of his gift of clairvoyance, the Byzantine Emperors John Paleologos (1341-1376) and John Kantakouzenos (1341-1355) visited him and were surprised by the fulfillment of his predictions. Theophanes, the igumen of Vatopedi monastery, wrote about St Maximus: "I invoke God as my witness, that I myself saw several of his miracles. Once, for instance, I saw him travel through the air from one place to another. I listened as he made a prediction concerning me, that first I would be an igumen, and then Metropolitan of Ochrid. He even revealed to me how I would suffer for the Church."



More icons of St. Maximus from Kavso-Kalyvia: (left to right) St. Maximus flying through the air, St. Maximus' prophecies to the Emperors, and St. Maximus meeting with St. Gregory of Sinai

http://www.athosmemory.com/index.php?option=com_fotothiki&Itemid=75&func=detail&id=18809

St Maximus abandoned his solitude only just before his death, and settled near the Lavra of St Athanasius, where he surrendered his soul to the Lord at 95 years of age (+ 1354). After his death, as in life, St Maximus was glorified by many miracles."

(taken from: <http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.asp?SID=4&ID=1&FSID=100171>)



Icon of Saints from the Holy Mountain (St. Maximos is depicted in the center of the front row, next to Sts. Peter and Athanasios of the Holy Mountain) (taken from: <http://vatopaidi.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/agioreites-agioi.jpg>)

St. Maximos and Akyndinos (amateur translation)

One day some monks from the Lavra went to the Righteous one, for reasons of interest, and with them went a lay person.

As soon as the Righteous one saw him from afar, he sent him away from afar calling him Most-harmless [*Ακινδυνάτος*¹] and faithless, despite the fact that he didn't know him before, but only from that time [he saw him].

For the Saint offered much against Akyndinos², and named him dangerously-evil [*κακοκύνδυνον*], demonic, a communicant with every heresy and servant of the Antichrist. Therefore heretics as this, he would drive away and anathematized them with boldness.

(from the book of the Righteous St. Maximos the Hut-Burner, written by the Righteous Theophanes Bishop of Peritheoriou and later published?

[μεταγραφέντα] by the Righteous St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain;

amateur translation from the Greek text: <http://misha.pblogs.gr/2010/01/o-latinofronas-kakokindynos-kai-o-osios-maximos.html>)

¹ St. Maximos calling him "*Ακινδυνάτος*" is using a superlative version of his name (which he knew miraculously through the Holy Spirit) most likely in a negative connotation, but I can't find a translation that accurately reflects this.

² Gregory Akyndinos (ca. 1300-1348) "was involved in the theological dispute surrounding the doctrine of Uncreated Light between [St.] Gregory Palamas and Barlaam of Calabria in the 1340s. A student of Palamas', he mediated between the two from 1337, warning Barlaam in 1340 that his attempts against his doctrine would be futile, but from 1341 he became critical of Palamism, denouncing it as Messalianism, and came to be Palamas' most dangerous adversary after Barlaam's return to Calabria. He was excommunicated at the council of Constantinople of

1347 and died in exile..." (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregory_Acindynus)

[**Note:** From this we can glean both the **great grace** given to St. Maximos, as he knew a person he had never seen before and recognized his false beliefs, and the **great zeal the Saint had for true Orthodox dogma**. Let it be clear that St. Maximos is not showing any hatred towards Akyndinos as a person, but dispassionate, righteous anger against the heresy that he would espouse. St. Paul gives St. Titus the same admonitions: "Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned" (Titus 3:10-11).]



Icon of Panagia of the Holy Mountain, Mount Athos (Icon courtesy of www.eikonografos.com used with permission)

Divine Vision of St. Akakios of Kavso-Kalyvia (amateur translation)

St. Akakios [April 12th: <http://ocafs.oca.org/FeastSaintsViewer.asp?SID=4&ID=1&FSID=101069>], as is mentioned by his successor Fr. Ionas, saw St. Maximos Kavso-Kalyvites during the time of the Holy Service in the *Kyriakon*, censuring holding a priestly stole, censuring around the Church and the Fathers, and following him were another forty venerable-looking and righteous ones with their *epanokalymma* [monastic head covering].

When St. Akakios saw this, he asked St. Maximos: "Who are these, who are following you censuring?" And he came and responded that they are those saved through St. Maximos the Righteous from the area of Kavso-Kalyvia.

The history-writer of the *Kyriakon* of this Skete, in the Narthex of the church has depicted, in confirmation of the revelation of St. Akakios, the following Saints in turn: Sts. Athanasios the founder of Megiste Lavra, Peter the Athonite, Neilos the Righteous, Maximos the *below-the-wing?* [*υπόπτερο*], Nephon the Righteous and others kneeling, along with the Righteous Akakios the New, before the throne of the All-Holy Trinity and interceding for all of the Fathers and brothers who will complete their lives in a God-pleasing manner at that holy and blessed place, the "**Garden of the Panagia**".

(amateur translation of Greek text from: <http://www.agiasma.info/forum/viewtopic.php?f=39&t=336>)

Source: <http://full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.com/2010/01/st-maximos-kavsokalyvites-hut-burner.html>