

## Theodosius of Chilandar - Rajko Maksimović

### TEMPTATION, FEAT AND DEATH OF SAINT PETER OF KORISHA

**NARRATOR:**

As a very young  
he was sent to study holy books ...  
... He stayed more and more  
in the church than at home,  
and he did not ask from parents  
either food or wear ...

He got acquainted with holy books,  
and was reflecting  
about the command from Gospel,  
listening the Lord speaking in it:

**(Tape):**

*He that loveth father or mother  
more than me  
is not worthy of me!*

**NARRATOR:**

... and thought of leaving his parents.  
... Soon afterwards  
his father went to the Lord  
and his mother understood her son,  
feeling that he intended to leave,  
and as every mother would,  
threw her arms around his neck  
and weeping spoke:

#### Mother's Plea

**MOTHER:**

*Leave thy mother not, my child,  
have mercy upon my widowhood;  
Take pity on the orphanage of thy sister,  
still being a child.*

*Leave me not, I beg thee,  
if I, for crying for thee,  
experience the death,  
thou will be responsible in front of God  
for having killed me.*

*I will not force thee to eat meat  
or to marry.  
Stay and live as thou wishest  
but only leave me not!*

**NARRATOR:**

...Then his mother also passed away,  
and leaving her daughter to him,  
went to the Lord.  
And he gave  
a deserving mass for his mother  
with grave-psalms and tears...  
... and kept striving to go there  
where he originally intended.

But he was retained by his sister's youth,  
since he had nobody to leave her with.

And when he asked her:

**PETER:**

*Wilt thou marry, my sister?*

**SISTER:**

*If thou escapest from marriage,  
why thou forcest others to it?  
bn  
For God's sake and thy living soul  
I shall neither do that  
nor shall I leave thee.*

*Thy God – my God  
and where thou goest to settle down,  
I shall go with thee;  
And as thou livest in fast  
I shall live with thee together  
only leave me not!*

**PETER:**

*Let the Lord's will be!*

## II

**NARRATOR:**

The saint wished to reach the desert ...

Having come with his sister  
into a high forest, near Prizren,  
above the village named Korisha,  
they stopped to have a rest,  
since his sister became exhausted  
and fell asleep.

And the saint stood up for prayer  
And worshipping, spoke:

## Prayer

### **PETER:**

*O, Lord, Thou knowest all,  
Thou knowest  
that because of my love for Thee,  
I am leaving my sister now,  
here in this desert.  
I offer my will and oath  
and Thou shalt provide my penance  
and life in the desert up to my end.*

*I pray for this servant of Thine  
- my sister:  
do not forget, my Lord,  
her purity and fast  
and her efforts for Thy sake ...*

### **NARRATOR:**

And he left her while she was asleep  
crying a river of tears  
because of departing.

And when she awoke,  
not seeing him around,  
she understood that he ran away  
as he originally intended.

And crying in the forest,  
breaking her heart by wailing,  
she spoke:

## Weeping

### **SISTER:**

*Woe be unto me, I am ruined!  
Woe is to me, my master-brother,  
woe is to me, my sweet light;  
Woe be unto me – the miserable one,  
what to do, where to go?*

*Oh, forest of God,  
I pray to find death within thee.  
Be merciful to me  
and receive me here,  
since I neither want  
to return into the world  
nor I deserve to live  
without my master-brother.*

## III

### **NARRATOR:**

After the departure of his sister,  
the saint found a valley  
surrounded by large rocks  
and many caves around.

### **CHOIR:**

Grabbing a hold with his fingers  
he climbed on a high rock  
with great effort  
as if it were column.  
And there – high up on the rock –  
he found a cave  
as if it was given by the Lord ...

Against the wind  
and sunlight in the eyes  
he settled down to dwell in it.

Getting bitten by the frost  
and burnt by the sun,  
he carried out the feat of the fast.

...Breadless,  
he was satisfied with food  
collecting sprouts of wild plants  
and bitter beech acorns,  
if that could be called food.

In a lower cave,  
bellow the saint's rock,  
a big serpent dwelt.

And evil spirits,  
who by their nature hate mankind,  
Together with that wicked serpent  
agreed to drive him away  
from the rock and the cave.

The serpent in his cave  
day and night, without stopping,  
was hissing furiously,  
and evil spirits invaded his mind,  
and with a frightful clatter  
screaming during the night,  
frequently attacked him.

Now they were coming  
as if they were dragging with them  
that snake who had his jaw open,  
and they were asking him  
to devour the saint;

And now simulating  
as if his sister was coming,  
crying in the night, they spoke:

**(Tape):**

*Brother, oh brother, come out,  
come out, my master-brother,  
and receive me into the cave...*

**CHOIR:**

... And they came again,  
and shaking the cave,  
and shouting and screaming to the saint,  
spoke:

*Why art thou, worthless, talking  
that thou art afraid of God  
and so much time  
thou didst not even try to find her!  
Art thou not afraid of the judgment  
since God will ask her soul from thee?*

**NARRATOR:**

And the saint,  
having understood  
that it was all the ruse of spirits,  
doing his prayer,  
he answered them nothing...

... Then he fell on his knees  
and weeping greatly, said:

**PETER:**

*Behold, oh Lord,  
Thou seest my trouble:  
from that place  
where I was brought by Thy goodness  
that cunning snake,  
with his anger and hissing,  
driveth me out.  
And I, Thy servant,  
as a man, sinful and weak,  
what kind of defense may I undertake  
without Thy force and support?*

**IV****CHOIR:**

One day in the midst of day,  
as a huge cloud of ravens,  
and in shapes of all the beasts,  
they gathered and attacked the saint.

The beasts with the roar,  
and as if they were going  
to devour him, appeared;  
And ravens, as if they would  
pick out the pupils of his eyes,  
rushed into the cave.

**NARRATOR:**

The saint stood up,  
and with arms crossed on his chest, said:

**PETER:**

*O my helper and my savior,  
do not hesitate, o Lord,  
behold, my enemies came  
in the shape of lions.  
Hurry up to free me,  
and do not give the soul  
of Thy worshipper to the beasts,  
and do not allow my enemies  
to rejoice upon myself! ...*

**NARRATOR:**

And once the river,  
flowing underneath that rock  
flooded by heavy rains and snow ...  
Having seen that, evil spirits rejoiced ...

**CHOIR:**

... And having gathered in a pack,  
they attacked the saint,  
and started dragging him  
towards that muddy stream,  
tearing his body across sharp stones ...

...and having dragged him to the stream,  
since they could not throw him in,  
beating him cruelly, they spoke:

**CHOIR:**

*Go away from us, thou worthless.  
There was no room for thee among men  
and thou came in our settlements  
to expel us,  
and thou unfairly usurped  
our rocks and caves;  
Stop insulting us or thou shalt finish badly!*

**PETER:**

*Here I am!  
In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ,  
I have no fear of ye!*

**NARRATOR:**

But evil spirits gathered  
as a great multitude  
and attacked the saint.

**CHOIR:**

... they had filled up the whole valley  
and with weapons  
they were pacing along the rocks,  
with helmets in the shape of boars,  
and with appearance of bears  
and other beasts, making a horrible sight  
in order to frighten the saint.  
They were barking like dogs,  
running around, and from behind  
started digging through the cave, saying:

*Courage! Do not slacken in the battle!  
There was no room for thee among men  
We'll get from this side in  
to cut his throat!*

And those who were in front of the cave,  
shouting and clapping and clanging,  
pressed around him, and jumped  
To slain him with spear and sword.

**PETER:**

*O, Lord, help me!  
Be merciful to me, my Lord,  
since I am weak and helpless  
and my soul is confused!*

**Tape:**

*Leave thy mother not, my child ...*

**PETER:**

*My soul is thirsty of ...*

[and here Peter dies]

**PETER'S SOUL:**

*My soul is thirsty of God,  
living and mighty,  
when shall I appear  
in the face of God?*

**V****O u r F a t h e r****CHOIR:**

Our Father which art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth  
as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

This text is based on **The Hagiography of St. Peter of Korisha** by *Theodosius of Chilandar* (12.-13. cent.), the monk and famous Serbian mediaeval writer, as well as on its modernized version done by Dimitrije Bogdanovic;

abridged and translated into English by the composer.

Casts and "versification" were also done by him.

Prof. Tomislav Jovanovic offered a precious help in transliteration of the original text.