



St. Arsenius The Great

St. Arsenius the Great was born in the year 350 A.D. in Rome to two very rich and God-fearing parents. From a young age, he loved reading scriptures and holy books. He was also ordained a deacon and then an archdeacon.

After the death of his parents, he and his sister sold all their possessions and gave all their riches to the poor and needy to follow an ascetic life. An emperor of that time named Theodosius the Great sought a man to trust the education of his children to and was recommended none other than St. Arsenius because of his great knowledge in both sacred and worldly knowledge. This is where St. Arsenius got the title of "Teacher of the Kings."

After ten years in teaching, he fled to the wilderness to join Abba Macarius the Great, who entrusted him to Saint John the Dwarf to try him. One day when all the monks sat down to eat, Saint John left Arsenius standing in the middle without inviting him, which in itself was a severe trial. Following this trial, a much greater test arose. Saint John took a loaf of bread and threw it on the ground before St. Arsenius, bidding him with an air of indifference to eat it if he would. Our humble saint cheerfully sat on the ground and took his meal. Saint John was greatly surprised and content with his behavior that he required him no more testing and ordained him a monk.

The Teacher Of Kings was often tried by many, asking him why such a noble man as he spends much time learning from uneducated monks. He simply replied "I am not unacquainted with the learning of the Greeks and the Romans; but I have not yet learned the alphabet of the science of the saints, whereof this seemingly ignorant Egyptian is master." One day St. Arsenius was even offered the heirship of a senator who had passed away, but the saint refused saying, "I died eleven years ago and cannot be his heir."

St. Arsenius often spent many nights watching and praying with tears alone in his cave hidden in the desert. He would turn his back to the evening sun and continue with his hands lifted up to Heaven until the sun shone on his face the next morning. He was a very quiet and peaceful man who loved ascetic life until he departed in peace in the year 445 A.D. He always told those who inquired of him about his silence, "I have always something to repent for after having talked, but have never been sorry for having been silent."

May the prayers of The Great Saint Arsenius, The Teacher Of The King's Children, be with us all. Amen.