

## **Basil The Great 330-379**



### **Key Designation**

- ◆ Bishop of Caesarea
- ◆ Father of Communal Monasticism
- ◆ Great Hierarch
- ◆ Doctor of the Church

### **Key Background Information**

- ◆ Born into a wealthy Cappadocian Greek family around 330
- ◆ His maternal grandfather was a Christian martyr who was executed in the years prior to Constantine I's conversion
- ◆ Raised by his grandmother with his four siblings who were also venerated as saints: Macrina the Younger, Naucratus, Peter of Sebaste and Gregory of Nyssa
- ◆ His life radically changed after he encountered Eustathius of Sebaste, a charismatic bishop and ascetic; As a result, Basil abandoned his teaching career and devoted his life to God; he traveled to Palestine, Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia to study ascetics and monasticism

### **Key Event**

- ◆ **360-** Basil attended the Council of Constantinople and became a strong supporter of the Nicene Creed
- ◆ **362-** Ordained as a deacon by Bishop Meletius of Antioch
- ◆ **365-** Ordained as a presbyter of the church in Caesarea by Eusebius
- ◆ **370-** Eusebius died; Basil consecrated as a bishop
- ◆ **379-** Basil suffers from liver disease and excessive ascetic practices and dies

### Key Ideas

- ◆ Insisted on divinity and consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son
- ◆ Frequently stresses the need for Reserve in doctrinal and sacramental matters
- ◆ Basil taught apocatastasis which entails the restoration of all sinners to Christ after purification
- ◆ Vehemently opposed the view that hell has an end while claiming that the many people who hold this view are deceived by the devil
- ◆ Stresses the complete equality of both genders, deriving from the same human lump, both in the image of God, endowed with the same honour and dignity, in perfect equality.

### Key Works

- ◆ ***On The Holy Spirit*** | An appeal to Scripture and early Christian tradition to prove the divinity of the Holy Spirit
- ◆ ***Refutation of the Apology of the Impious Eunomius*** | Written in 364 and comprised of three books against Eunomius of Cyzicus
- ◆ ***De Spiritu Sancto*** | A list and quotes of illustrious men of the church to include Iranaeus of Lyon, Clement of Rome, Dionysius of Rome, Dionysius of Alexandria, Eusebius, Julius Africanus, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Firmilian and Origen

### Key Results

- ◆ Through his examples and teaching, Basil affected a noteworthy moderation in the austere practices which were previously monastic
- ◆ Basil was credited with coordinating the duties of work and prayer to ensure a proper balance between the two
- ◆ Basil is remembered as one of the most influential figures in the development of Christian monasticism
- ◆ Basil is recognized as the father of Eastern monasticism
- ◆ As a result of Basil's influence, numerous religious orders in Eastern Christianity bear his name.