



**Our Father Among the Saints Basil the Great,  
Archbishop of Caesarea of Cappadocia  
Whom the Holy Church Celebrates on January 1.**

Saint Basil the Great was born about the end of the year 329 in Caesarea of Cappadocia, to a family renowned for their learning and holiness. His parent's names were Basil and Emily. His mother Emily (commemorated July 19) and his grandmother Macrina (Jan.14) are Saints of the Church together with all his brothers and sisters: Macrina, his elder sister (Jan. 19), Gregory of Nyssa (Jan. 10), Peter of Sebastia (Jan. 9), and Naucratus. Basil studied in Constantinople under the sophist Libanius, then in Athens, where he formed a friendship with the young Gregory, a fellow Cappadocian, later called "the Theologian." Through the good influence of his sister Macrina (see July 19), he chose to embrace the ascetical life, abandoning his worldly career. He visited the monks in Egypt, in Palestine, in Syria, and in Mesopotamia, and upon returning to Caesarea, he departed to a hermitage on the Iris River in Pontus, not far from Annesi, where his mother and sister Macrina were already treading the path of the ascetical life; here he also wrote his ascetical homilies.

About the year 370, when the bishop of his country reposed, he was elected to succeed to his throne and was entrusted with the Church of Christ, which he tended for eight years, living in voluntary poverty and asceticism, having no other care than to defend holy Orthodoxy as a worthy successor of Orthodoxy. The Emperor Valens, and Modestus, the Eparch of the East, who were of one mind with the Arians, tried with threats of exile and of torments to bend the

Saint to their own confession, because he was the bastion of Orthodoxy in all Cappadocia, and preserved it when Arianism was at its strongest. But he set all their malice at naught, and in his willingness to give himself up to every suffering for the sake of the Faith, showed himself to be a martyr by volition. Modestus, amazed at Basil's fearlessness in his presence, said that no one had ever so spoken to him. "Perhaps," answered the Saint, "you have never met a bishop before." The Emperor was almost won over by Basil's dignity and wisdom. When Valens' son fell gravely sick, he asked Basil to pray for him. The Saint promised that his son would be restored if Valens agreed to have him baptized by the Orthodox; Valens agreed, Basil prayed and the son was restored. But afterwards the Emperor had him baptized by the Arians, and the child died soon after. Later, Valens, persuaded by his counselors, decided to send the Saint into exile because he would not accept the Arians into communion; but his pen broke when he was signing the edict of banishment. He tried a second time and a third, but the same thing happened, so that the Emperor was filled with dread, and tore up the document, and Basil was not banished. The truly great Basil, spent with extreme ascetical practices and continual labors at the helm of the Church, departed to the Lord on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, in 379, at the age of forty-nine.

His writings are replete with wisdom and erudition, and with these gifts he set forth the doctrines concerning the mysteries both of the creation (see his *Hexaemeron*) and of the Holy Trinity (see *On the Holy Spirit*).

Because of the majesty and keenness of his eloquence, he is honoured as "the revealer of heavenly things" and "the Great."

Saint Basil is also celebrated on January 30 with Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint John Chrysostom.

Rest from labour.

Text: The Great Horologion © 1997 The Holy Transfiguration Monastery Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

Icon courtesy The Holy Transfiguration Monastery Brookline, Massachusetts 02445



*Dismissal Hymn of the Saint. First Tone*

**T**HY sound hath gone forth into all the earth, which hath received thy word. Thereby thou hast divinely taught the Faith; thou hast made manifest the nature of all things that be; thou hast adorned the ways of man. O namesake of the royal priesthood, our righteous Father Basil, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

*Kontakion of the Saint. Fourth Tone  
On this day Thou hast appeared*

**F**OR the Church art thou in truth \* a firm foundation, \* granting an inviolate \* lordship unto all mortal men \* and sealing it with what thou hast taught, \* O righteous Basil, revealer of heavenly things.



**SAINT BASIL THE GREAT**  
COURTESY SAINT GREGORY OF SINAI MONASTERY

## OIKOS

**T**HE mingling-bowl of chastity, the mouth of wisdom, the foundation of doctrines, Basil the Great spiritually flasheth like lightening upon all. Come ye therefore, let us stand in the house of God, fervently fixing our gaze upon his wonders with delight. And flashing with their light as with a beacon, let us warm ourselves as with a beacon, let us warm ourselves with the purifying spirit of his life, imitating his faith, whereby he was shown to be indeed a house of God; and unto him we cry out in praise: O righteous Basil, revealer of heavenly things.

## SYNAXARION

On this day we commemorate our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

### *Verses*

Though he hath died, Basil in the Lord yet liveth;  
And he liveth with us, speaking from his writings.

On January first thou didst die, O Basil.



† THE BURNING BUSH  
Mount Athos