

## 1: AtonementOnline: Ss. Basil and Gregory Nazianzen

*St. Gregory of Nazianzen (aka Nazianzus) was the best friend of St. Basil the Great. After studying together in Athens, they returned to their native Cappadocia (now Eastern Turkey) to serve the Lord.*

Classical and Christian Friendship One thing we should expect to find unchanged when we look at the new world that emerges during the Christianization of the Greco-Roman Empire is the fact that people continue to form friendships and continue to consider and reflect on the nature of friendship as such. Even so, there is some justification in expecting that the rise of Christianity might effect some kind of change on the institution of friendship, as indeed it did on many other institutions borrowed from the classical world. One might indeed expect that such a change in communing with friends might have taken two possible, seemingly antithetical, directions: In other words, in a Christian perspective, the benefits and duties of friendship are no longer limited to my friends, as it might have been in antiquity but are to be extended to everyone, to every fellow Christian, insofar as every Christian is a member of the newly emerged community and to the extent that the Gospel is addressed to "all nations," to every man and woman. It is the balance between, or rather the mutual upholding of these two antithetical ways that constitutes the paradox of Christian friendship. From the historiographical point of view Christian authors maintained both. Furthermore, one could introduce a seemingly pseudo-historical distinction between classical antiquity and Christianity a distinction drawn on the basis of the assumption that the former was oriented towards *philia* and *eros*, while the latter placed itself under the banner of the notion of *agape* of which the classical world knew little or nothing. In the famous exchange between Jesus and Peter in John For it would make little sense indeed to imagine, with the view that takes *philein* to be a lesser declaration of love than *agapan*, that Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him, to which Peter replies that he "likes" Him. Pavel Florensky reads this exchange, particularly the use of the verb *agapan*, as a way of indicating to Peter that he is prepared to be loved even as an enemy is loved see Luke 6: Peter's reply with *philein* indicates, on the other hand, that he loves the Teacher in the way of *philia*, that is, the way that one can love only a friend and never an enemy: Taking inspiration from this exchange between Jesus and Peter, I will attempt a presentation of the friendship between two of the most illustrious Friendship in Late Antiquity ecclesiastical authors who have had, without any doubt, a long and lasting influence on Christian writers: Basil the Great, archbishop of Cappadocia at Caesarea, and St. Gregory the Theologian. The second part of this chapter is arranged in three "acts," as it were, each corresponding to a movement of friendship from *agapan* to *philein* in their relationship, and appending, at the end, a third part as a conclusion. But first, some general remarks on the particularities of Christian friendship are in order. Its prepolitical nature makes friendship more suitable for, or more understandable within, a Christian context, since the Church, and the bonds of communion amongst its members, ought to stand in a similar idiosyncratic position vis-à-vis the political world—"for our citizenship is in heaven" Phil. At the same time, we see in the friendship between Basil and Gregory something new emerging, something that is particularly Christian, or rather, some characteristics that belong specifically to their identity as Christians. Let us summarize the characteristics proper to Christian friendship. First, in terms of ethics: Christian friendship appears to be a-causal, that is, free from an economy of ends as it is so often found in classical treatments of the topic. Third, in terms of epistemology: Christian friendship differentiates itself from classical friendship with respect to the question to which antiquity insists, the question of preference between loving or being loved—reminding the reader that the Greek for the verb "to befriend," *philein*, can also mean "to love," and friendship is a form of love. For classical treatments of friendship, such as Aristotle's, the question "to love or to be loved" is decided in terms of Greek metaphysics, that is, in terms of act over potency, form over matter, knowledge over ignorance. Thus, to love is preferred over being loved, the lover over the beloved, for the lover knows. Thus, with Greek metaphysics we have the priority of knowledge. Love in Christianity however, is blind with respect to the beloved, whom one is commanded to love regardless of that person's qualities or virtues the sinner as much as the saint, and regardless of whether that love is reciprocated the enemy as much as the friend, but also blind with respect to one's own doing, nor knowing what one is doing or whether one is doing anything at all cf, Mt.

Even the possibility of loving rests upon the condition of having been loved before, before knowing it, even before the foundation of the world Eph. However, the difference between the two worlds that emerges most noticeably in the material presented here is the fact that neither Gregory, who dedicates a considerable part of his work to his relationship with his friends and in particular to Basil, his best friend, nor Basil, who avoids writing about the subject, in line, we presume, with his more reserved Friendship in Late Antiquity character, are interested in constructing a theory of friendship. Abstract discussion of friendship is thoroughly lacking in their work. In short, they are interested in their friends, not in friendship in general. Given, then, that their orientation is historical—they present us with the history of their friendship—we should not be surprised that they adopt their medium accordingly, that is, narrative over analysis, particularly autobiographical we could say "confessional" with a nod to St. Indeed, the documents most pertinent to our discussion are precisely Gregory's so-called autobiographical poems, his funeral oration for Basil, and their letters. Unlike earlier philosophers, Gregory talks about their friendship, not about friendship as such. Here the willingness of Christians to focus on their concrete experience is underlined, the best example being that of St. It is far from accidental then, that when St. There is, we suspect, a good reason for this change of emphasis between, on the one hand, the approach of the philosopher and, on the other that of the Christian thinker. The result was a slow but irrevocable reversal of the old priority of theory's universalism over history's particularity. The lesson of those Confessions, demonstrated in so many ways, is the newly felt conviction that for God the history of the one individual is as worthy and important as the history of the whole human race. I could think of only one example from the pre-Christian philosophical literature where there is similar emphasis on the autobiographical and John Panteleimon Manoussakis the confessional: *A Story of Friendship in Three Acts: From agapan to philein*. By studying together and, even more eagerly, by studying each other through their common endeavors, they come to learn about themselves. And it is the same Arcadian experience that Gregory would recall with a reasonable nostalgia in his late autobiographical poems and in the funeral oration for his friend, Basil. He arrives in Athens after a long and stormy journey by sea from Alexandria—an experience that, when he recalls it later in life, allows him to cast himself as both Ulysses and St. Not without Basil, who arrives shortly afterward. That was the "spark," as Gregory puts it, of their friendship. But there was another event which set that first spark ablaze. The challenge might have been provoked by the fact that he had escaped the initiation harassment on account of the rumors of his intelligence which, such was the presumption, would have been offended by an exhibition of sophomoric puerility but wasn't that the point? So the Armenian students wished to check for themselves whether Basil was worthy of the special treatment that he had received. Gregory recounts how, to begin with, he took their side, blinded by their pretensions of friendship, and hoping, perhaps, to see Basil triumph over their arguments. Soon, however he came to realize that this agon was nothing other than a setup that would have subjected Basil to a different form of harassment, possibly more humiliating than the earlier one. He therefore turned against their Armenian colleagues, exposed their plans, and, in doing so, won the victory for Basil. Gregory rescued Basil, so he tells us, from the humiliation of the initiation. On account of the seriousness of Basil's character to the ethos stasimon. But it is a man with precisely such character who has nothing to be afraid of and who could therefore have endured the silliness of the ritual. And where was the risk for Basil in that? If he was the prodigy that Gregory describes him as being in Orat. The two episodes that Gregory chose to recall several years later, anxious to remind his audience of his friendship with the late Archbishop of Caesarea, especially since the fidelity of this friendship had been brought under question in the last years, reveal a great deal more about that friendship and about Gregory himself than he might have been ready to admit. One suspects that they must have been staples in a stock of such stories idealizing their common life in Athens. He repeats them here as he must have done on several other occasions before. He moreover, according to that human feeling, which makes us, when we have all at once attained to the high hopes which we have cherished, look upon their results as inferior to our John Panteleimon Manoussakis expectation, he, I say, was displeased and annoyed, and could take no delight in his arrival. He was seeking for what he had expected, and called Athens an empty happiness. I however tried to remove his annoyance, both by argumentative encounter, and by the enchantments of reasoning; alleging, as is true, that the disposition of a man cannot at once be detected,

without a long time and more constant association, and that culture likewise is not made known to those who make trial of her, after a few efforts and in a short time. In this way I restored his cheerfulness, and by this mutual experience, he was the more closely united to me. It could have forced upon him the dilemma of choosing between Basil and Athens. Either alone would not do. Indeed, when Basil departed from Athens and in the way that he did, Athens meant nothing to Gregory. As Gregory's modern biographer aptly puts it, "Gregory continued to live in Athens, but the lights had gone out in Arcadia. Rather Gregory's motives seem to have been to secure for himself, through such a series of calculated moves, the possibility of Basil's friendship. For that, he needed both Basil and the city Orat. Such an early departure would have robbed Gregory of the bliss he describes in his oration, a bliss whose mere memory elicits some of the most daring language in his corpus. One cannot perpetuate an Arcadian sojourn indefinitely. So Basil left Athens soon afterward since he could not bear to be seen any more in that miserable state or being in the position to explain to everyone the reasons of their separation. For it was like cutting one body into two, to the destruction of either part, or the severance of two bullocks who have shared the same manger and the same yoke, amid pitiable bellowings after one another in protest against the separation. Friendship in Late Antiquity Basil had led him to believe that he would not leave Athens without him. That image seems to have become for Gregory a regulatory concept for understanding the friendship, but it was, at the same time, a remnant of the classical homoiotis likeness, according to which a friend with a different viewpoint or following a different course of action, is hard to justify. It is very much the same condition that would cause a great deal of pain and elicit very similar reactions from St. Augustine upon hearing about his friend's death. After their Athenian sojourn was over, they never managed to recapture the carefree happiness of the time of their common studies. Gregory's decision to join Basil in his monastic seclusion in Pontus Annesoi, must be read as a brief and unsuccessful attempt to return to their former Arcadia. Basil's new life, however, was not fit for Gregory, who had a rather different understanding of what it meant for a Christian to live the philosophic life. The passage from *de gapan rc philein* is marked by the interruption of an infantile desire to see the friend as an extension of oneself, an interruption that is occasioned by the emergence of the friend as other than oneself. The friend's otherness allows him to appear with his own distinct characteristics, which may contradict or even challenge the assumptions that we sought to impose upon him. *Ennechos* AND *De Philosophia* LII The first letters<sup>35</sup> exchanged between the two friends record for us the beginnings of a disagreement concerning the proper way of living what usually goes by the name of *philosophia*. When Gregory writes, remembering those early days in Athens, that philosophy became their study,<sup>35</sup> he means only <sup>82</sup> John Panteleimon Manoussakis loosely and incidentally the discipline we call by that name today. As it becomes clear in the rest of the oration, philosophy for him meant something more. He goes on to explain how they embarked upon the study of *philosophia* more systematically when they had both left Athens and were no longer students<sup>36</sup> suggesting, perhaps, the time when Basil was touring the monastic communities of Egypt and Palestine and how Gregory's care for his parents became a hindrance on his own way to *philosophia*. The same terminology is used in *De Vita Sua* and *Philosophia*, for him, therefore, is clearly not a branch of knowledge, but a way of life—a life lived in introspection, away from the clamor of worldly affairs. The change that Christianity had brought about to the goal and purpose of human life effected a similar change, as noted above, not only in the understanding of *philia*, but also in the understanding of *philosophia*, insofar as it is a form of *philia* as well. Even though we read that the model for such a philosophical life was already set by the example of Plotinus and the Neoplatonic ascetics,<sup>40</sup> it was Christian monasticism, which was just at this time reaching its first bloom, that fully embodied all the nuances that the *ennoia* *philosophia* conveyed to the Christian mind of that time. But when I actually considered the divine ways it was hard to decide which path was definitely the better. Each thing seemed good or bad depending on the arguments, as is often the case when action needs to be taken. I admired Elijah the Tishbite and the great Carmel or the strange food, The property of the Precursor, the desert, and the simple way of life of the sons of Jonadab. Then again a desire for the Holy Scriptures got the upper hand as did the light of the spirit in the contemplation of the word—Friendship in Late Antiquity Practices not suited to the desert or a life of calm. After swinging to and fro between these positions many times, I at last reconciled my desires in the following way, and giving each position its due, checked the

vacillations of my mind: I realized that those who enjoy a practical life Are useful to others who are in the thick of things But do not benefit themselves; they are distracted by the wicked, too. On the other hand, Those who have withdrawn are in some way more stable And with a tranquil mind can keep their gaze directed towards God, But they only benefit themselves, for their love is a narrow one And strange and harsh is the life they lead.

### 2: BasilGregory Software Labs - Simple Solutions For Small Problems

*Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa are collectively referred to as the Cappadocian Fathers. The Eastern Orthodox Church and Eastern Catholic Churches have given him, together with Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom, the title of Great Hierarch.*

The Institute for Christian Formation Follow us on Facebook to keep up to date with our news and newest resources! Basil the Great Basilica of St. These men lived in the fourth century. They were both born in the year in Cappadocia, in what is now the country of Turkey, and as students they became friends. Basil decided he wanted to become a monk. He founded the first monastery in Asia Minor, and eventually became the archbishop of Caesarea. He was committed to helping the less fortunate. He founded a hospice, cared for the sick, and helped those who suffered hunger as a result of droughts and famine. He was a famous preacher, and challenged his flock to care for others and help the poor. He is considered one of the great teachers of the Church. Basil died on January 1, Gregory also became a bishop, and eventually became the Patriarch of Constantinople. He had a great love and knowledge of Scripture, and was known as both a preacher and a writer. Gregory died on January 25 in the year or It is fitting that their feast day is celebrated during the Christmas Season, as Saint Basil, especially, has a long standing feast day tradition in the Eastern Church. My paternal grandparents immigrated to this country from Greece. Much like the bread traditions from other countries, the Vasilopita is baked with a special coin inside, and the person who receives the piece of bread with the coin is said to be blessed with good fortune for the upcoming year. Watch the video below to learn more. You can find out even more about the Vasilopita tradition, as well as find a recipe for the Vasilopita here. I purchased my Vasilopita coins, with the image of Saint Basil, for my vasilopita from the Greek Orthodox Department of Religious Education, Item FL, the Vasilopita coin came with the story of the Vasilopita, a recipe, as well as traditional cutting instructions. Basil, which I purchased. The story on the side of the box in which the figurine came told the story of St. Basil is the gift giver who visits every home.

### 3: Basil and Gregory: January 2nd | St Chrysostom's Church News and Views

*Both St. Basil and St. Gregory, whose feast we celebrate today, were born in the early fourth century, and both were schooled at Athens in rhetoric—a skill they taught for pay until they sold everything and entered monastic life in Pontus, Asia Minor. Both became bishops of important sees in the.*

World Day of Peace message: But neither we nor human development can, on our own, provide ultimate meaning. True humanism must be open to the Absolute and a vocation that gives life its significance. Indifference to neighbor shows itself in different ways. Some people are well-informed but not engaged: They know, but they focus their gaze, thoughts, and actions on themselves. Widespread and deep corruption exacerbates the problem. Some people are deaf to the cry of the suffering. We can grow incapable of feeling compassion and uninterested in caring for people. Because we dwell in a common home, we must ask about its health. Indifference often results in pollution, exploitation of forests, and destruction of the environment, since everything is interrelated. And the way we treat animals affects how we treat other people. Indifference leads to self-absorption and a lack of commitment and so impedes peace with God, others, and the environment. I can gain insight by asking myself what the priests asked John: Paul cried when thinking of the "wolves" who would deceive his flock. Many martyrs have died for the truth. Jesus, "the Truth," "came into the world to testify to the truth. His first questioners challenge his identity, but he denies each one they offer. The most honest testimony is action. We testify to our care for human life by how we respond to natural tragedies, evaluate candidates for political office, and respond to heartbroken families. But John knew he was only a voice to prepare the way for the Messiah King. He prepared the way for Jesus and announced his mission. How does my life point others to Christ?

### 4: Basil, Gregory, and the Holy Spirit | Dominicana

*The US Episcopal Church now remembers this Gregory on 9 May, as did the Roman Church up to , and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commemorates Gregory of Nazianzus together with his friends St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory of Nyssa on 14 June.*

Jan 1st, By Casey Chalk Category: Blog Posts A reflection on the importance of friendship in ecumenical dialogue in honor of the feast day of St. Basil of Caesarea and St. Gregory Nazianzus, two early Church Fathers with a deep and life-long friendship. The Catholic Church on 2 January celebrates the feast day of St. Gregory Nazianzus, two fourth century Church Fathers known for their deep theological reflections and devoted adherence to orthodoxy as bishops in Asia Minor present-day Turkey. Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, is considered an early important influence in the development of monasticism, the liturgy, and the doctrine of the Trinity. They enjoyed an intimate life-long friendship, so much so that Gregory wrote of Basil, Then not only did I feel full veneration for my great Basil because of the seriousness of his morals and the maturity and wisdom of his speeches, but he induced others who did not yet know him to be like him. The same eagerness for knowledge motivated us. This was our competition: It seemed as if we had one soul in two bodies. Gregory Nazianzus and St. Basil of Caesarea Their mutual love for Christ, and mutual passion for seeking the truth, provided them the substance of this profoundly important friendship. In , Basil even urged Gregory to work with him, side-by-side, as Bishop of Sasima, a position the contemplative Gregory was disinclined to take. Reflecting not only on the theological significance of their lives but also on their mutual relationship is an occasion to consider how friendship and the pursuit of truth can be connected, sometimes in mutual harmony, other times with deep and difficult disagreement and division. In light of Basil and Gregory I wish to share a story from my own life that exemplifies how friendship and the pursuit of truth can present great challenges to a friendship, but ultimately can be an occasion for sanctification and deeper relational intimacy, as, ideally, it should. A little over a month after arriving, several of my co-workers were killed in a terrorist attack. Also unnerving were the Taliban fighters who had snuck into Kabul to launch frequent rocket attacks towards the downtown area where most Westerners lived and worked, several landing within meters of my living quarters. Compounding the ever-present uncertainty of when the next mm would strike, the Taliban stormed a nearby building and engaged in a day-long firefight with Afghan police while we waited it out in a bunker; stray bullets from the battle even hit buildings on my compound. To add insult to injury, in my personal life, my long-distance relationship with a girlfriend of the time was falling apart. In the midst of all this, I clung hard to my Reformed faith, listening to the sermons of my PCA pastor back in the States. I even gave out old copies of Modern Reformation to military chaplains and evangelical coworkers. Sure, Reformed theology sounded Biblically and intellectually compelling, but would it hold up in the foxhole? I was anxious to prove that it did. One day during that interminably long winter I called my best friend, Barrett Turner, a student in his last year at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. We joked and caught up on the latest news. Then, his mood turned a bit serious, as if he knew that what he was going to tell me would probably hurt or upset me. He said that he and his wife, after long and prayerful reflection, had decided to enter the Catholic Church at the upcoming Easter vigil. All the same, to hear that my worst fears had come to fruition was deeply painful and discouraging. This was my best friend. We had both explored and ultimately accepted Reformed Christianity while in college. We had lived together, studied together, sought to evangelize together. I was the best man at his wedding, where the presiding minister was our favorite PCA pastor. Yet his studies had been for a prospective career as a pastor or professor, mine were part-time with the objective of deepening my own theological knowledge and keeping my options open for possible later ministry or service in the PCA. Now this man that I had admired so much had seemingly gone off the theological deep-end, which, I was concerned, might have grave implications for his soul and those of his wife and son. I know he said he was doing this for sincere theological, philosophical, and historical reasons, but I figured there must be some other explanation. Or maybe he was under the undue influence of his wife Beth, who I had always suspected was a little too sympathetic to Catholicism. Why should I care what St. Teresa of such-and-such thinks about God? I

grew up Catholic and had left the Church as a child with my parents. I had grown up spending hours and hours hearing and talking about the problems with Catholicism, especially given that much of my extended family was still Catholic. In retrospect I see how deeply prideful and unsympathetic these thoughts were. So often my desire was not so much to see God glorified, but to prove myself right, presupposing not that I needed to listen humbly and learn, but that I already had the answers. In truth, Christ calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves, a calling that requires us to exemplify a love that is eager not so much to prove ourselves right, or win an argument, but that seeks to presuppose the best, rather than the worst motives in others. We, like Christ, must be long-suffering with others, especially with those we are keen to caricature unfairly. Paul, I needed the film removed from my self-righteous eyes, a process that would take time and require the work of the Holy Spirit, and the patient, prayerful companionship of those who loved me. I came home to Virginia, and not too long after, got word from my friend that he would be moving to Virginia with his family to pursue a graduate degree at Catholic University. I confess I had mixed emotions – it would be good to see them more often, but now there was this great obstacle to our friendship. Maybe this will be my opportunity to straighten out him and his wife, I thought. They arrived that summer and immediately started developing friendships with people in the Catholic community in Washington, D. It was a bit unnerving though, having to spend all this time around Catholics just to be with my friend and his family. Even little things really bothered me. Once at their house Beth told some anecdote that involved her going to confession. Oh brother, I thought. I suppose what surprised me was how deeply my friend and his wife still loved me and valued our friendship. They knew something now stood between us, but they tried so hard to make me welcome in their lives. I was also surprised at how they seemed to be growing in holiness and virtue. The opposite seemed true, the more I spent time with them. I asked for the explanations behind why all of this had happened, the extended version. I started pressing with questions, particularly those as a Reformed Christian that had been most compelling to me in contemplating the problems with Catholicism. What about all the corruption, the immorality, the wickedness done in the name of the Catholic Church? Yet my friends asked the same questions when they were contemplating Catholicism, and their answers, though not always immediately compelling, were at least reasonable and worthy of further reflection. They countered with questions of their own, going after some of the most fundamental tenets of Reformed Christianity, and even general Protestant principles: On what authority do we even accept the contents of the Biblical canon as truly from God? I had heard criticisms of these beliefs before, but never so sophisticatedly presented or deeply troubling for my evangelical faith. I realized I was a bit in over my head. My friend had graduated with the highest honors at seminary, and had a strong command of Greek, Hebrew, Biblical exegesis, and Christian history. I was starting to feel, much to my annoyance, like a bit of a theological novice. But more than all this, I still deeply valued my friendship with both of them. At that time, we had been friends for almost ten years, and had been through a lot together. If they had made a terrible decision by becoming Catholic, it was a duty, an obligation of our friendship, that I urge them to get out before they did real damage to their lives or souls. I needed to start thinking at a much more sophisticated level, praying with a deeper earnestness and urgency. I had pridefully thought myself an expert on Protestantism and Catholicism. It was time to eat some humble pie, hit the books, and consult all my mentors in the Reformed faith. Thus proceeded a summer and fall of intense reading, praying, reflecting, and conversing, both with Protestants and Catholics. Needless to say, the Protestant position was becoming less and less compelling, and more and more problematic as I studied the centuries-old debates. Friendship was what initiated this opportunity for a deeper and more honest examination of truth. Once I was able to stop the polemics, the psychologizing, the uncharitable and prideful ways of thinking and communicating that had so often defined my interactions with Catholics, I was able to start listening to my friends. Indeed, this is what is required of all of us if we want to get to the truth, which is so often communicated not just through books and articles, but in personal and intimate interactions between people who care about one another. Indeed truth, according to our Christian faith, is much more than an abstract concept; it is a person, Jesus Christ, who is Truth incarnate. Theological, historical, and logical arguments are all important, and in many ways drive and provoke the necessary reflections and conversations for ecumenical dialogue. This is equally true of Protestants and Catholics. Yet if we believe those people whom we deeply love and care about have made

decisions that will endanger their lives, their futures, and possibly their souls, we have an obligation to reach out, in love, and mutually pursue truth together. Furthermore, it is often through friendship that the most difficult and painful truths are often communicated — things we do not want to hear, that challenge us, that complicate what we thought to be simple and straightforward, that frustrate our plans or intentions. Matthew Zuberbueler center back I hope that this feast day commemorating a wonderful deep friendship in Christian history — that of St. Gregory Nazianzus — is an occasion for renewed attempts at understanding and contemplating, at a truly thoughtful and charitable level, why so many of us have turned to the Catholic Church. We of course, in turn, will need to try our best to listen to and appreciate our Protestant brothers and sisters, who have many questions, as well as many sincere and valuable insights and beliefs of their own. May God spur a renewed desire for ecumenical dialogue amongst friends, and may we pursue the truth, no matter where it leads or what sacrifices it requires, all for the glory of God. Gregory of Nazianzus, who exemplified true Christian friendship in your mutual love of Christ and pursuit of truth, pray for us!

**5: St. Basil the Great - Saints & Angels - Catholic Online**

*Basil and Gregory were both natives of Cappadocia, but here, again, under different circumstances; Basil was born of a good family, and with Christian ancestors; Gregory was the son of the bishop of Nazianzus, who had been brought up an idolater, or rather an Hysistarian, a mongrel sort of religionist, part Jew, part Pagan.*

Basil the Great St. Basil the Great Please help support the mission of New Advent and get the full contents of this website as an instant download. Bishop of Caesarea , and one of the most distinguished Doctors of the Church. Born probably ; died 1 January, He ranks after Athanasius as a defender of the Oriental Church against the heresies of the fourth century. With his friend Gregory of Nazianzus and his brother Gregory of Nyssa , he makes up the trio known as "The Three Cappadocians", far outclassing the other two in practical genius and actual achievement. Basil the Elder, father of St. He was not a priest Cf. He married Emmelia, the daughter of a martyr and became the father of ten children. Three of these, Macrina, Basil, and Gregory are honoured as saints ; and of the sons, Peter, Gregory , and Basil attained the dignity of the episcopate. Under the care of his father and his grandmother, the elder Macrina, who preserved the traditions of their countryman, St. He was still young when his father died and the family moved to the estate of the elder Macrina at Annesi in Pontus , on the banks of the Iris. As a boy, he was sent to school at Caesarea , then "a metropolis of letters", and conceived a fervent admiration for the local bishop , Dianius. Later, he went to Constantinople, at that time "distinguished for its teachers of philosophy and rhetoric", and thence to Athens. Here he became the inseparable companion of Gregory of Nazianzus , who, in his famous panegyric on Basil Or. According to him, Basil was already distinguished for brilliancy of mind and seriousness of character and associated only with the most earnest students. He was able, grave, industrious, and well advanced in rhetoric, grammar, philosophy , astronomy , geometry, and medicine. It has been affirmed, though probably incorrectly, that Basil spent some time under Libanius. He tells us himself that he endeavoured without success to attach himself as a pupil to Eustathius Ep. At the end of his sojourn at Athens , Basil being laden, says St. Gregory of Nazianzus "with all the learning attainable by the nature of man", was well equipped to be a teacher. Caesarea took possession of him gladly "as a founder and second patron" Or. To the successful student and distinguished professor, "there now remained", says Gregory Or. Fortunately, Basil came again in contact with Dianius, Bishop of Caesarea , the object of his boyish affection, and Dianius seems to have baptized him, and ordained him Reader soon after his return to Caesarea. It was at the same time also that he fell under the influence of that very remarkable woman , his sister Macrina, who had meanwhile founded a religious community on the family estate at Annesi. Basil himself tells us how, like a man roused from deep sleep, he turned his eyes to the marvellous truth of the Gospel, wept many tears over his miserable life, and prayed for guidance from God: To learn the ways of perfection, Basil now visited the monasteries of Egypt , Palestine, Coele-Syria, and Mesopotamia. He returned, filled with admiration for the austerity and piety of the monks , and founded a monastery in his native Pontus , on the banks of the Iris, nearly opposite Annesi. Eustathius of Sebaste had already introduced the eremitical life into Asia Minor ; Basil added the cenobitic or community form, and the new feature was imitated by many companies of men and women. Sozomen , Church History VI. Basil became known as the father of Oriental monasticism, the forerunner of St. How well he deserved the title, how seriously and in what spirit he undertook the systematizing of the religious life , may be seen by the study of his Rule. Basil was drawn from his retreat into the area of theological controversy in when he accompanied two delegates from Seleucia to the emperor at Constantinople, and supported his namesake of Ancyra. There is some dispute as to his courage and his perfect orthodoxy on this occasion cf. A little later, however, both qualities seem to have been sufficiently in evidence, as Basil forsook Dianius for having signed the heretical creed of Rimini. To this time c. It is possible, also, that Basil wrote his monastic rules in the briefer forms while in Pontus , and enlarged them later at Caesarea. Both incident and correspondence however are questioned by some critics. Basil still retained considerable influence in Caesarea , and it is regarded as fairly probable that he had a hand in the election of the successor of Dianius who died in , after having been reconciled to Basil. In any case the new bishop , Eusebius , was practically placed in his office by

the elder Gregory of Nazianzus. Eusebius having persuaded the reluctant Basil to be ordained priest, gave him a prominent place in the administration of the diocese. In ability for the management of affairs Basil so far eclipsed the bishop that ill-feeling rose between the two. A little later when the attempt of Valens to impose Arianism on the clergy and the people necessitated the presence of a strong personality, Basil was restored to his former position, being reconciled to the bishop by St. There seems to have been no further disagreement between Eusebius and Basil and the latter soon became the real head of the diocese. During the five years spent in this most important office, Basil gave evidence of being a man of very unusual powers. He laid down the law to the leading citizens and the imperial governors, settled disputes with wisdom and finality, assisted the spiritually needy, looked after "the support of the poor, the entertainment of strangers, the care of maidens, legislation written and unwritten for the monastic life, arrangements of prayers, liturgy? In time of famine, he was the saviour of the poor. In Basil succeeded to the See of Caesarea, being consecrated according to tradition on 14 June. Caesarea was then a powerful and wealthy city Sozomen, Church History V. Its bishop was Metropolitan of Cappadocia and Exarch of Pontus which embraced more than half of Asia Minor and comprised eleven provinces. The see of Caesarea ranked with Ephesus immediately after the patriarchal sees in the councils, and the bishop was the superior of fifty chorepiscopi Baert. The need of a man like Basil in such a see as Caesarea was most pressing, and he must have known this well. Some think that he set about procuring his own election; others e. Maran, Baronius, Ceillier say that he made no attempt on his own behalf. In any event, he became Bishop of Caesarea largely by the influence of the elder Gregory of Nazianzus. His election, says the younger Gregory loc. During his previous administration of the diocese Basil had so clearly defined his ideas of discipline and orthodoxy, that no one could doubt the direction and the vigour of his policy. By years of tactful conduct, however, "blending his correction with consideration and his gentleness with firmness" Greg. If on the one hand he strenuously defended clerical rights and immunities Ep. Basil did not confine his activity to diocesan affairs, but threw himself vigorously into the troublesome theological disputes then rending the unity of Christendom. He drew up a summary of the orthodox faith; he attacked by word of mouth the heretics near at hand and wrote tellingly against those afar. His correspondence shows that he paid visits, sent messages, gave interviews, instructed, reproved, rebuked, threatened, reproached, undertook the protection of nations, cities, individuals great and small. There was very little chance of opposing him successfully, for he was a cool, persistent, fearless fighter in defence both of doctrine and of principles. His bold stand against Valens parallels the meeting of Ambrose with Theodosius. While assisting Eusebius in the care of his diocese, Basil had shown a marked interest in the poor and afflicted; that interest now displayed itself in the erection of a magnificent institution, the Ptochoptopheion, or Basileiad, a house for the care of friendless strangers, the medical treatment of the sick poor, and the industrial training of the unskilled. Built in the suburbs, it attained such importance as to become practically the centre of a new city with the name of he kaine polis or "Newtown". It was the motherhouse of like institutions erected in other dioceses and stood as a constant reminder to the rich of their privilege of spending wealth in a truly Christian way. It may be mentioned here that the social obligations of the wealthy were so plainly and forcibly preached by St. Basil that modern sociologists have ventured to claim him as one of their own, though with no more foundation than would exist in the case of any other consistent teacher of the principles of Catholic ethics. The truth is that St. Basil was a practical lover of Christian poverty, and even in his exalted position preserved that simplicity in food and clothing and that austerity of life for which he had been remarked at his first renunciation of the world. In the midst of his labours, Basil underwent suffering of many kinds. Athanasius died in and the elder Gregory in, both of them leaving gaps never to be filled. In began the painful estrangement from Gregory of Nazianzus. Anthimus, Bishop of Tyana, became an open enemy, Apollinaris "a cause of sorrow to the churches" Ep. Eusebius of Samosata was banished, Gregory of Nyssa condemned and deposed. His health was breaking, the Goths were at the door of the empire, Antioch was in schism, Rome doubted his sincerity, the bishops refused to be brought together as he wished. Had he lived a little longer and attended the Council of Constantinople, he would have seen the death of its first president, his friend Meletius, and the forced resignation of its second, Gregory of Nazianzus. Basil died 1 January, His death was regarded as a public bereavement; Jews, pagans, and foreigners vied with his own flock in doing

him honour. The earlier Latin martyrologies Hieronymian and Bede make no mention of a feast of St. In the Greek "Menaia" he is commemorated on 1 January, the day of his death. In , John, Patriarch of Constantinople, in consequence of a vision, established a feast in common honour of St. The Bollandists give an account of the origin of this feast; they also record as worthy of note that no relics of St. Basil are mentioned before the twelfth century, at which time parts of his body, together with some other very extraordinary relics were reputed to have been brought to Bruges by a returning Crusader. Basil sent from Constantinople to the pope. By common consent, Basil ranks among the greatest figures in church history and the rather extravagant panegyric by Gregory of Nazianzus has been all but equalled by a host of other eulogists. Physically delicate and occupying his exalted position but a few years, Basil did magnificent and enduring work in an age of more violent world convulsions than Christianity has since experienced. Newman , The Church of the Fathers. By personal virtue he attained distinction in an age of saints ; and his purity, his monastic fervour, his stern simplicity, his friendship for the poor became traditional in the history of Christian asceticism. In fact, the impress of his genius was stamped indelibly on the Oriental conception of religious life. In his hands the great metropolitan see of Caesarea took shape as the sort of model of the Christian diocese ; there was hardly any detail of episcopal activity in which he failed to mark out guiding lines and to give splendid example. Not the least of his glories is the fact that toward the officials of the State he maintained that fearless dignity and independence which later history has shown to be an indispensable condition of healthy life in the Catholic episcopate. Some difficulty has arisen out of the correspondence of St. Basil with the Roman See. That he was in communion with the Western bishops and that he wrote repeatedly to Rome asking that steps be taken to assist the Eastern Church in her struggle with schismatics and heretics is undoubted; but the disappointing result of his appeals drew from him certain words which require explanation. Evidently he was deeply chagrined that Pope Damasus on the one hand hesitated to condemn Marcellus and the Eustathians, and on the other preferred Paulinus to Meletius in whose right to the See of Antioch St. Basil most firmly believed. At the best it must be admitted that St.

**6: Gregory Nazianzen and Basil the Great | Charlotte was Both**

*Basil and Gregory realized that our worship of the Holy Spirit is tied to his role in creating and saving us. Something can only act from the way it exists. Therefore, if the Holy Spirit acts in our lives as God would do (namely, by creating and saving us), that is because he is God.*

Gregory Nazianzen and Basil the Great. He was an important Bishop in the fourth century to whom the entire Church of the East, and likewise the Church of the West, looks with admiration because of the holiness of his life, the excellence of his teaching and the harmonious synthesis of his speculative and practical gifts. He was born in about A. He studied with the best teachers in Athens and Constantinople. Unsatisfied with his worldly success and realizing that he had frivolously wasted much time on vanities, he himself confessed: Attracted by Christ, Basil began to look and listen to him alone cf. He devoted himself with determination to the monastic life through prayer, meditation on the Sacred Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, and the practice of charity cf. Letters 2, 22 , also following the example of his sister, St Macrina, who was already living the ascetic life of a nun. He was then ordained a priest and finally, in the year , Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia in present-day Turkey. Through his preaching and writings, he carried out immensely busy pastoral, theological and literary activities. With a wise balance, he was able to combine service to souls with dedication to prayer and meditation in solitude. We must all help one another and cooperate as members of one body Ep , 3. And on this point, he used courageous, strong words in his homilies. These words are very timely. Furthermore, Basil reminds us that to keep alive our love for God and for men, we need the Eucharist, the appropriate food for the baptized, which can nourish the new energies that derive from Baptism cf. De Baptismo 1, 3: It is a cause of immense joy to be able to take part in the Eucharist cf. The Eucharist, an immense gift of God, preserves in each one of us the memory of the baptismal seal and makes it possible to live the grace of Baptism to the full and in fidelity. For this reason, the holy Bishop recommended frequent, even daily, Communion: So who would doubt that communicating continuously with life were not living in fullness? The Eucharist, in a word, is necessary for us if we are to welcome within us true life, eternal life cf. He addressed a Discourse to them on how to benefit from the pagan culture of that time. He recognized with great balance and openness that examples of virtue can be found in classical Greek and Latin literature. Such examples of upright living can be helpful to young Christians in search of the truth and the correct way of living cf. Therefore, one must take from the texts by classical authors what is suitable and conforms with the truth: With the famous image of bees that gather from flowers only what they need to make honey, Basil recommends: We must use these books, following in all things the example of bees. They do not visit every flower without distinction, nor seek to remove all the nectar from the flowers on which they alight, but only draw from them what they need to make honey, and leave the rest. Basil recommended above all that young people grow in virtue, in the right way of living: Dear brothers and sisters, I think one can say that this Father from long ago also speaks to us and tells us important things. And, lastly, knowledge and recognition of God the Creator, the Father of us all: As a distinguished theologian, orator and champion of the Christian faith in the fourth century, he was famous for his eloquence, and as a poet, he also had a refined and sensitive soul. Gregory was born into a noble family in about A. After his education at home, he attended the most famous schools of his time: Remembering this friendship, Gregory was later to write: The same eagerness for knowledge motivated usâ€œ. This was our competition: These words more or less paint the self-portrait of this noble soul. Yet, one can also imagine how this man, who was powerfully cast beyond earthly values, must have suffered deeply for the things of this world. On his return home, Gregory received Baptism and developed an inclination for monastic life: As he confides in his autobiography cf. However, he subsequently accepted this vocation and took on the pastoral ministry in full obedience, accepting, as often happened to him in his life, to be carried by Providence where he did not wish to go cf. He then concludes, referring to the sick and to people in difficulty: Give God proof of your gratitude for you are one who can benefit and not one who needs to be benefitedâ€œ. Be rich not only in possessions but also in piety; not only in gold but in virtue, or rather, in virtue alone. Gregory teaches us first and foremost the importance and necessity of prayer. God is

thirsting for us to thirst for him cf. In prayer, we must turn our hearts to God, to consign ourselves to him as an offering to be purified and transformed. In prayer we see all things in the light of Christ, we let our masks fall and immerse ourselves in the truth and in listening to God, feeding the fire of love. In a poem which is at the same time a meditation on the purpose of life and an implicit invocation to God, Gregory writes: Scrutinize yourself seriously, your being, your destiny; where you come from and where you must rest; seek to know whether it is life that you are living or if it is something more. You have a task, my soul, so purify your life: Please consider God and his mysteries, investigate what existed before this universe and what it is for you, where you come from and what your destiny will be. The holy Bishop continuously asked Christ for help, to be raised and set on his way: So it was that Gregory felt the need to draw close to God in order to overcome his own weariness. He experienced the impetus of the soul, the vivacity of a sensitive spirit and the instability of transient happiness. You have a task, soul, St Gregory also says to us, the task of finding the true light, of finding the true nobility of your life. And your life is encountering God, who thirsts for our thirst.

### 7: Dress to God's Word / "Liturgical Dress": Basil and Gregory

*Their mutual love for Christ, and mutual passion for seeking the truth, provided them the substance of this profoundly important friendship. In , Basil even urged Gregory to work with him, side-by-side, as Bishop of Sasima, a position the contemplative Gregory was disinclined to take.*

Emilia, Mother of Sts. Churches of the Russian tradition keep her feast on January 3, along with her son Basil. She was the daughter of a martyr and the daughter-in-law of Macrina the Elder. Along with her husband, Basil the Elder, she gave birth to ten children. She instilled the Orthodox faith in her children, teaching them to pray and devote their lives to the service of the Church. As a result of her zealous yet maternal instruction of her children, five of them are commemorated as saints on the Church calendar: After her children left home, St. Emilia was persuaded by Macrina to forsake the world. Together they founded a monastery for women. Emilia divided the family property among her children. A number of liberated female slaves desired to join the pair, and a convent was formed. They lived under one roof and held everything in common: They ate, worked, and prayed together. They were so eager to advance in virtue that they regarded fasting as food and poverty as riches. The harmony of this model community of women was unspoiled by anger, jealousy, hatred, or pride. Indeed, as the Church sings of monastics, they lived like angels in the flesh. Living in this manner for many years, Emilia reached old age. When an illness signaled her departure from this world, her son Peter came to her side. Together with Macrina, he tended to his mother in her last days. The first fruit is my first-born daughter, and the tithes are these, my youngest son. Let these be for you a rightly acceptable sacrifice, and let your holiness descend upon them! Emilia was buried as she had requested, beside her husband in the chapel at their estate in Annesi, where Naucratus had also been laid. By permission of www.

### 8: Saint Basil the Great | Biography, Facts, & Legacy | [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)

*Basil was educated in Caesarea, Constantinople, and Athens in the fourth century. He enjoyed stimulating university life. There he met Gregory Nazianzen, a quiet, scholarly man. The two became close friends. Basil traveled through the East and studied monastic life. As a result, he formed his own.*

Biography[ edit ] Early life and education[ edit ] Gregory was born of Greek parentage [6] in the family estate of Karbala outside the village of Arianzus, near Nazianzus , in southwest Cappadocia. Gregory went on to study advanced rhetoric and philosophy in Nazianzus, Caesarea , Alexandria and Athens. On the way to Athens his ship encountered a violent storm, and the terrified Gregory prayed to Christ that if He would deliver him, he would dedicate his life to His service. Priesthood[ edit ] In Gregory returned to Nazianzus and was ordained a presbyter by his father, who wanted him to assist with caring for local Christians. Arriving at Nazianzus, Gregory found the local Christian community split by theological differences and his father accused of heresy by local monks. By this time Emperor Julian had publicly declared himself in opposition to Christianity. Invectives asserts that Christianity will overcome imperfect rulers such as Julian through love and patience. This process as described by Gregory is the public manifestation of the process of deification thesis , which leads to a spiritual elevation and mystical union with God. This success confirmed for both Gregory and Basil that their futures lay in administration of the Church. Gregory would later refer to his episcopal ordination as forced upon him by his strong-willed father and Basil. It was here that Gregory preached the first of his great episcopal orations. Following the deaths of his mother and father in , Gregory continued to administer the Diocese of Nazianzus but refused to be named bishop. Donating most of his inheritance to the needy, he lived an austere existence. Near the end of this period his friend Basil died. Gregory at Constantinople[ edit ] Emperor Valens died in The accession of Theodosius I , a steadfast supporter of Nicene orthodoxy, was good news to those who wished to purge Constantinople of Arian and Apollinarian domination. His cousin Theodosia offered him a villa for his residence; Gregory immediately transformed much of it into a church, naming it Anastasia, "a scene for the resurrection of the faith". Look at these facts: Christ is born, the Holy Spirit is His Forerunner. Christ is baptized, the Spirit bears witness to this Christ works miracles, the Spirit accompanies them. Christ ascends, the Spirit takes His place. What great things are there in the idea of God which are not in His power? What titles appertaining to God do not apply also to Him, except for Unbegotten and Begotten? I tremble when I think of such an abundance of titles, and how many Names they blaspheme, those who revolt against the Spirit! Fearing his popularity, his opponents decided to strike. On the vigil of Easter in , an Arian mob burst into his church during worship services, wounding Gregory and killing another bishop. Escaping the mob, Gregory next found himself betrayed by his erstwhile friend, the philosopher Maximus the Cynic. However, the episode left him embarrassed and exposed him to criticism as a provincial simpleton unable to cope with intrigues of the imperial city. The emperor, determined to eliminate Arianism, expelled Bishop Demophilus. Gregory was subsequently enthroned as bishop of Constantinople at the Basilica of the Apostles, replacing Demophilus. Theodosius wanted to further unify the entire empire behind the orthodox position and decided to convene a church council to resolve matters of faith and discipline. In the spring of they convened the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople, which was attended by Eastern bishops. After the death of the presiding bishop, Meletius of Antioch , Gregory was selected to lead the Council. Hoping to reconcile the West with the East, he offered to recognize Paulinus as Patriarch of Antioch. I was responsible for the storm, but I would sacrifice myself for the salvation of the ship. Seize me and throw me I was not happy when I ascended the throne, and gladly would I descend it. The emperor, moved by his words, applauded, commended his labor and granted his resignation. The Council asked him to appear once more for a farewell ritual and celebratory orations. Gregory used this occasion to deliver a final address Or. He spent the next year combating the local Apollinarian heretics and struggling with periodic illness. He also began composing De Vita Sua, his autobiographical poem. Gregory established Eulalius as bishop of Nazianzus and then withdrew into the solitude of Arianzum. After enjoying six peaceful years in retirement at his family estate, he died on 25 January in Throughout his

life Gregory faced stark choices. Should he pursue studies as a rhetor or philosopher? Would a monastic life be more appropriate than public ministry? Was it better to blaze his own path or follow the course mapped for him by his father and Basil? Biographers suggest that it was this dialectic which defined him, forged his character and inspired his search for meaning and truth. He is especially noted for his contributions to the field of pneumatology – that is, theology concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Gregory asserted that Christ was fully human, including a full human soul. In contrast to the Neo-Arian belief that the Son is *anomoios*, or "unlike" the Father, and with the Semi-Arian assertion that the Son is *homoiousios*, or "like" the Father, Gregory and his fellow Cappadocians maintained the Nicæan doctrine of *homoousia*, or consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. His orations were cited as authoritative by the First Council of Ephesus in 449. By he was designated Theologus, or Theologian by the Council of Chalcedon [4]: He is widely quoted by Eastern Orthodox theologians and highly regarded as a defender of the Christian faith. His contributions to Trinitarian theology are also influential and often cited in the Western churches. His relics, consisting of portions of his body and clothing, were transferred to Constantinople in 1048, into the Church of the Holy Apostles. Part of the relics were taken from Constantinople by Crusaders during the Fourth Crusade, in 1204, and ended up in Rome. The relics are now enshrined in the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George in the Phanar. These include a valuable autobiographical poem of nearly 2,000 lines; about one hundred other shorter poems relating to his past career; and a large number of epitaphs, epigrams, and epistles to well-known people during that era. The poems that he wrote that dealt with his personal affairs refer to the continuous illness and severe sufferings physical and spiritual which assailed him during his last years. In the tiny plot of ground at Arianus, all that remained to him of his rich inheritance was by a fountain near which there was a shady walk. At this point, Gregory retired to spend his days as a hermit. It was at this point he decided to write theological discourses and poetry of both a religious and an autobiographical nature. He died about 25 January 375, although the exact date of his death is unknown.

### 9: Gregory of Nazianzus - Wikipedia

*Basil and I were both in Athens. We had come, like streams of a river, from the same source in our native land, had separated from each other in pursuit of learning, and were now united again as if by plan, for God so arranged it.*

Gregory, whose feast we celebrate today, were born in the early fourth century, and both were schooled at Athens in rhetoric—a skill they taught for pay until they sold everything and entered monastic life in Pontus, Asia Minor. Both became bishops of important sees in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. Basil the Great was the ecclesial speaker and administrator, and Gregory of Nazianzus the Theologian was the poet and rhetorical mastermind, writing forty-five orations and over seventeen thousand lines of poetry. Along with many other theological works, both are known for their early and compelling arguments that the Holy Spirit is in fact God. Fourth-century views on the Holy Spirit were varied. Some pagans aware of Christian doctrine called the Spirit an external mind or activity that ordered the cosmos. How are we saved? Obviously through the regenerating grace of baptism. How else could we be? We are confirmed in our understanding that salvation comes through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If we now reject what we accepted at baptism, we will be found further away from our salvation than when we first believed. Calling the Holy Spirit anything less than God only leaves us with further questions about our salvation. Man is called to worship the One who elevates and saves him, and this belongs to God alone. Since it is the Spirit in whom we worship and are baptized, failing to call the Spirit divine along with the Father and Son would detract from what belongs to God. If he is to be worshipped, why not adored? And if to be adored, how can he fail to be God? Something can only act from the way it exists. Therefore, if the Holy Spirit acts in our lives as God would do namely, by creating and saving us, that is because he is God. In fact, any significant function belonging to God is also performed by the Holy Spirit. Scripture calls the Spirit the Sanctifier who makes us holy, the Comforter who widens our hearts, and the Advocate sent by the Son from the Father to teach us all things. These are deeds and names that correspond to a divine Person, that is, one acting according to the same divine nature as that instantiated by the Father and the Son. Prior to his death and rising, Christ promised to send us the Spirit of truth from the Father. Because of his place among the divine Persons of the Trinity, the Spirit is one with the Father and the Son in that same divinity. Following the words of Gregory and Basil, may we, in our worship of God, give thanks for our rebirth and re-creation in the Spirit, and may our recognition of this work of the Spirit in our lives cause us rightly to call him divine.

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