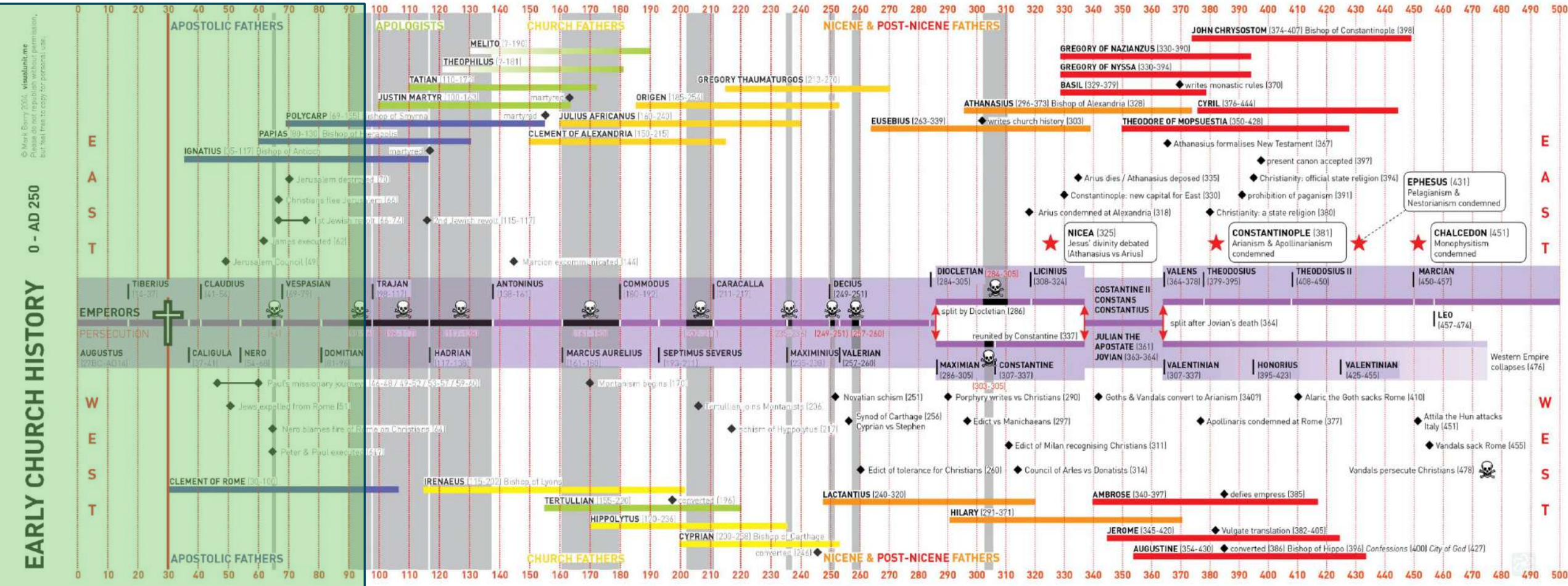


Talk III: The Early Church Fathers Stage 1

1 Cor 4:15 "For although you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel, I have begotten you."

PATROLOGY IV — THE CHURCH FATHERS PART I

Pre-Servants Program
Ehab Roufail

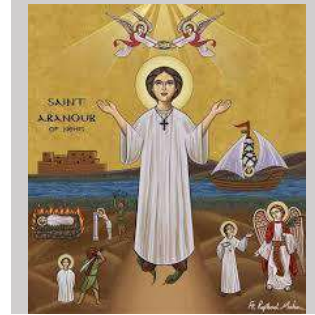




3. THIRD CENTURY - AGE OF MARTYRDOM



- St. Philopateer – born in Rome - 225 AD
- Enlisted in the Army of Emperor Decius
- Brought Several victories to Decius
- Decius wanted all his soldiers to offer incense to his Gods
- Emperor ordered him beaten with whips and stalks
- Bound him in iron fetters and cut off his head in Caesarea – 250 AD
- His body revealed to a poor man after the persecutions
- St. Basil asks his intercession against emperor Julian the Apostate



- St. Abanoub – born in Nehisa, Egypt 3rd Century
- His parents died when he was young leaving him their possessions
- At 12yrs old is in church when priest requests all remain faithful under Diocletian's persecutions
- He came home and distributed his gold and silver and journeyed to Samanoud to confess his faith
- On the way Archangel Michael appeared to prepare him for his suffering
- The governor placed him upside down in a boat's mast where he was beaten
- His nose began to bleed – the soldiers were blind and the ruler paralysed till Abanoub prayed for them
- The boat arrived in Athribis where the soldiers confessed their faith and were martyred
- He was sent to Alexandria where he was tortured and received the crown of martyrdom – 4th Century



- St. Demiana was born in Egypt in the third century
- Her mother died while she was young and at 15 she refused marriage and asked her rich father to provide a house for her and her 40 friends in the outskirts to devote themselves to God
- Diocletian forced her father to renounce his faith
- She went to her father to say “I would have preferred to hear of your death”
- Her father went back to Diocletian and confessed his faith in Christ
- He was Martyred
- Diocletian then ordered that St. Demiana and her 40 virgins denounce their faith.
- She was tortured for days in cruel ways – archangel Michael would appear to heal her wounds
- Until the archangel told her she was to be martyred this last day
- Finally the commander martyred her along with the forty virgins





3. THIRD CENTURY - MONASTICISM



• **St Paul** the first Hermit – a rich young orphan at age 16 fled Decius persecution to go to the desert till he died at 113 years old!

• He was daily fed by a half loaf of bread from a crow

• **St. Anthony** born 251 AD. At 18 Yrs old heard the Gospel “if you want to be perfect sell all you have give to the poor and come follow me. Matth 19:21

• He sold his land and placed his sister in a virginal house and later departed to the western desert

• Met with St. Paul and praised God together that day the Lord provided a whole loaf of bread in the mouth of the Crow

• Went to Alexandria to encourage the believers and his Disciple Pope Athanasius – it was said that more turned to Christ by seeing Anthony in those days

• Died at 105 Yrs old



• **St Syncletica** the first monastic community in the world for women was founded in Alexandria by St. Syncletica whose biography and teachings were preserved by Pope Athanasius. St. Pachomius established two women's convent's and St, Shenouda established a womens monastery



• **St. Pachomius** – born 290 AD was guided by an angel to form the life of *Koinonia* where monastics would live together in community

• His Coenobitic laws were translated into Greek and Latin and were used by St. Basil the great and Benedict the father of western monasticism

• **St. Shenouda the Archimandrite** – abbot of the white monastery in Thebes for 65 yrs with 2200 monks and 1800 nuns. A political and social reformer

• Took from the life of Anthony and Pachomius and formed a life with set periods for common prayer and worship. Saturday Vespers and Sunday liturgy was open to all the villagers

• Along with a great wealth of teachings he was granted the gift of miracle performing and died at the age of 118



3. FOURTH CENTURY - HERESIES



ARIANISM

- Arianism denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ, asserting that he was a created being and not of the same substance (homoousios) as God the Father.
- Instead, they believed that Jesus was the highest and greatest of God's created beings.
- **Response:** The First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD was convened to address this heresy.
- It resulted in the Nicene Creed, which affirmed the orthodox belief in the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son.



APOLLINARIANISM

- Apollinarians believed that while Jesus had a divine nature, his human nature was incomplete, with his divine Logos replacing the human rational soul.
- In essence, they denied the full humanity of Jesus Christ.
- **Response:** The First Council of Constantinople in 381 AD condemned Apollinarianism and affirmed that Jesus Christ was fully human and fully divine.



MACEDONIANISM

- Macedonians, also known as Pneumatomachians, denied the full divinity of the Holy Spirit and believed that the Holy Spirit was a created being or a servant of the Father and the Son.
- **Response:** This heresy was addressed at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 AD, which affirmed the divinity of the Holy Spirit and expanded the Nicene Creed to include a statement about the Holy Spirit.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

The period between the First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD and the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD is often regarded as the Golden Age of the Church Fathers in Orthodox Christianity. This era was marked by intense theological development, the resolution of critical doctrinal disputes, and the flourishing of Christian thought and monastic practice.

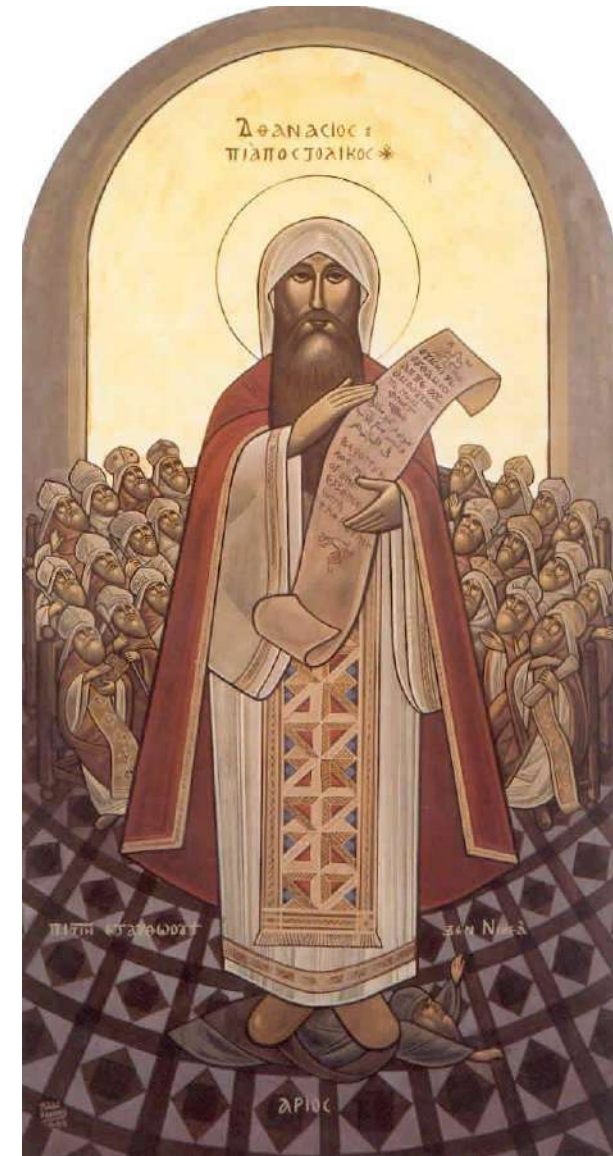
Key Aspects:

Theological Development:

Council of Nicaea (325): Convened by Emperor Constantine, this first ecumenical council addressed the Arian controversy, affirming the consubstantiality (homoousios) of the Son with the Father, and establishing the Nicene Creed as a foundational statement of Christian faith.

Council of Constantinople (381): The second ecumenical council expanded the Nicene Creed to include a fuller understanding of the Holy Spirit, combating the Pneumatomachian heresy and reinforcing the doctrine of the Trinity.

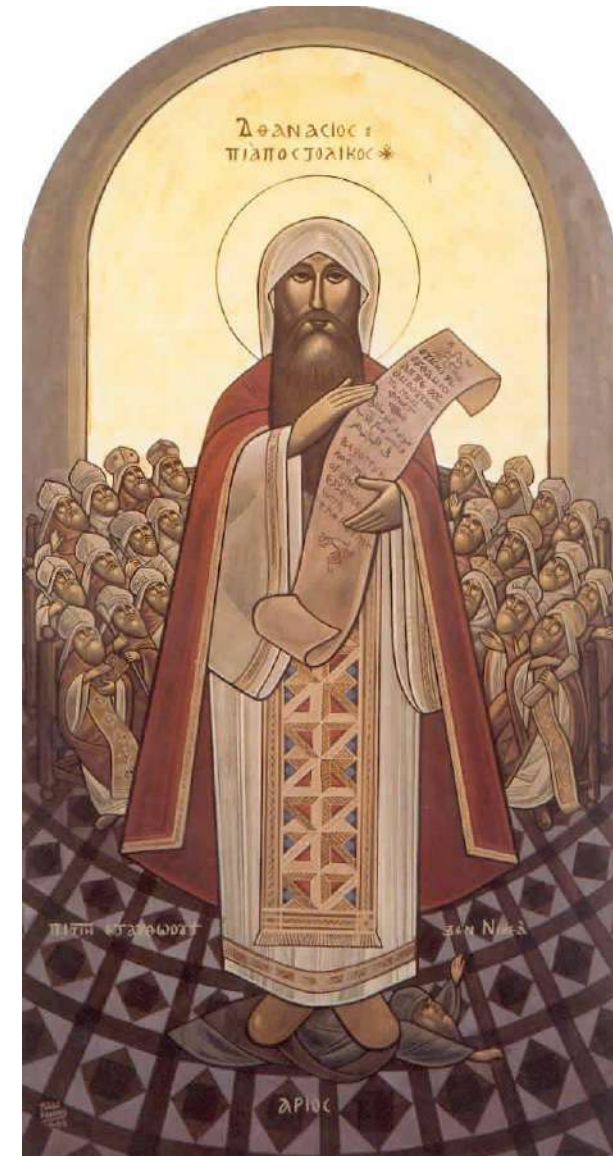
Council of Ephesus (431): The third ecumenical council dealt with the Nestorian controversy, affirming the Theotokos (God-bearer) title for Mary and emphasizing the unity of Christ's divine and human natures.



THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Influential Church Fathers:

- **St. Athanasius of Alexandria:** A leading defender of Nicene orthodoxy against Arianism, Athanasius' works, such as "On the Incarnation," were pivotal in shaping Christian doctrine on the nature of Christ.
- **Cappadocian Fathers (St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Gregory of Nyssa):** These theologians made significant contributions to Trinitarian theology, Christology, and the relationship between the divine and human natures of Christ.
- **St. John Chrysostom:** Known for his powerful preaching and exegetical works, Chrysostom emphasized ethical living and the practical application of Christian teachings.
- **St. Cyril of Alexandria:** His theological contributions, especially regarding the nature of Christ and the union of his divine and human natures, were pivotal. His writings and leadership were instrumental at the Council of Ephesus. His extensive writings and theological arguments significantly shaped the doctrine of the Incarnation and the unity of Christ's nature, reinforcing the orthodox Christian belief in the hypostatic union. St. Cyril's contributions were critical in the establishment of Christological orthodoxy, making him a revered figure in both the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox traditions.





4. FOURTH CENTURY

EVENTS



1.St. Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296-373): Athanasius was a prominent defender of Nicene Christianity and played a crucial role in the early debates about the nature of Christ. He is best known for his staunch opposition to the Arian heresy.

2.St. Basil the Great (c. 329-379): Basil was a theologian, monastic leader, and bishop of Caesarea. He is known for his development of monastic rules and his contributions to early Christian liturgy. The Eastern Orthodox Church considers him one of the Three Holy Hierarchs.

3.St. Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329-390): Gregory, also known as Gregory the Theologian, was a close friend of Basil the Great and a key figure in the development of early Christian theology. He is known for his role in the debates over the nature of the Trinity.

4.St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-394): Gregory of Nyssa was a younger brother of Basil the Great and a prominent theologian. He made significant contributions to the development of Christian doctrine, especially in the area of the Trinity.

5.Saint Ambrose of Milan (c. 340-397): Ambrose served as the bishop of Milan and was a prominent theologian and preacher. He played a key role in the conversion of Saint Augustine and influenced early Christian thought in the Western Church.

6.St. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407): John Chrysostom, known as "Golden Mouthed" for his eloquent preaching, served as the Archbishop of Constantinople. He is revered for his sermons and writings, which continue to be highly regarded in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

7.Saint Jerome (c. 347-420): Jerome is best known for his translation of the Bible into Latin, known as the Vulgate. His work played a crucial role in shaping Western Christianity and remains the official Latin Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

8.St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430): Augustine is one of the most influential figures in Christian theology and philosophy. His writings, including "Confessions" and "City of God," have had a profound impact on Western Christianity.

9.St. Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444): Cyril was a central figure in early Christian theology and the debates concerning Christology. As the Patriarch of Alexandria, he played a pivotal role in the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD, where he defended the title of Theotokos (God-bearer) for Mary and opposed Nestorianism, which separated Christ's divine and human natures.

- 301 AD Armenia first to adopt Christianity as state religion
- 303-311 Emperor Diocletian Christian persecution and attempt to eradicate the faith
- 313 AD Emperor Constantine - Christianity an allowed Roman state religion – edict of Milan
- 325 AD 1st Ecumenical Council – Nicea – Arian Heresy
- 381 AD 2nd Ecumenical Council – Constantinople – against Macedonianism and Apollinarianism
- 386-387AD Conversion of Augustine the theologian
- 391 AD Emperor Theodosius I decree ordering closure of pagan temples



NICEA 325 AD

- 318 Church fathers assembled
- Pope Alexandros of Alexandria came with 20 Bishops and a 25 yr old deacon **St. Athanasius**
- **Arian Heresy** – That the Son is not equal to the Father and is created and that the Holy Spirit is Created
- Led to definition of Creed – “of the **Substance of the Father**”
- Date of Easter
- Question of re-baptism of Apostates
- Celibacy of Clergy



CONSTANTINOPLE 381 AD

- 150 Church fathers assembled
- Pope Timothy 22nd Pope of Alexandria presided – notable presence of **St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Gregory of Nysa, St. Basil the Great of Caesarea**
- **Macedonian, Apollinarian and Sabellian Heresies** denounced
- **Heresy was that the Holy Spirit is not equal to the Father or the Son and is created**
- Addition to The Creed that Christ is **fully human** – “**became Man**”
- “**And in the Holy Spirit the life Giver who proceeds from the Father...**”



EPHESUS 431 AD

- 200 Church fathers assembled
- St. Cyril the Great 24th Pope Of Alexandria was presiding along with 50 of his bishops.
- St. Shenouda the Archimandrite was also present
- **Heresy – Nestorius** view that St. Mary gave birth only to the Human Jesus, then the Holy Spirit came upon him. So St. Mary is mother of Jesus and not mother of God the Theotokos



THE SECOND STAGE I (300 AD-360 AD)

This extended from the time of St Athanasius, the Apostolic to the time of St Cyril the Great in the east and St Augustine in the west.

Many great leaders in the Church arose in this era and theological debates entered into regarding The Holy Trinity in the east and the Work of Grace in the west.

The **first part** of the second stage extended from **300 AD to 360 AD**. During which time the theological argument regarding the doctrine of The Holy Trinity appeared and Orthodox doctrine had been determined.

290	300	310	320	330	340	350	360	370	380	390
DIOCLETIAN		CONSTANTINE							THEODOSIUS	
		ATHANASIUS <i>the Great, Bishop of ALEXANDRIA</i> 296-373								
		ANTONY <i>the Great of EGYPT</i> ? 251-356								
		PACHOMIUS 287 - 347								
						EVAGRIUS <i>of PONTUS</i> c 346-399				
						JOHN CASSIAN				
						BASIL <i>of CAESAREA</i> c. 330-379				
						GREGORY <i>of NAZIANZUS</i> 329-389				
						GREGORY <i>of NYSSA</i> c. 330-c. 395				

ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT — FATHER OF MONASTICISM

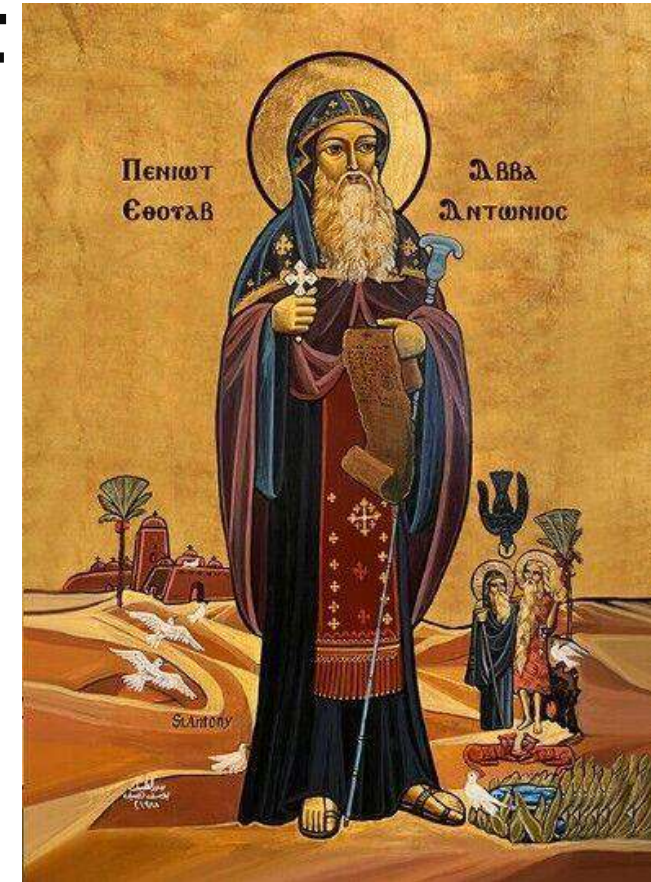
From Athanasius of Alexandria, "The Life of St. Anthony,"

St. Anthony was born to Christian parents about 251 AD in the village of Kemmen El-Arous, near the city of Beni Suef. This small village was located in the middle of Egypt. As a youth St. Anthony grew up in the church absorbing all its biblical teachings. His love for Christ grew as each day passed. Following the death of his father, he came to realize earthly existence was but a passing of time. He began to examine the true meaning of life.

It is said that St. Anthony learned his first lesson from a dead man. As he looked at his dead father's body, he learned something from it. His father had owned 300 acres of the best farmland in Upper Egypt and had wealth, power, and influence. This, St. Anthony would inherit.

It has been written that St. Anthony said over his father's body, "You have departed from this world not by your choice; I however, will leave it by my choice before I am forced out. Behold that great rich man filling the world with power and influence now lies motionless with no control over his own body." Thus began the many lessons St. Anthony would learn from others in his quest for spiritual excellence.

He would often ask, "How can I leave everything in this world and live only for the Lord Jesus Christ? I want to live as the Lord Jesus Christ and his disciples lived." To St. Anthony this was indeed the life of perfection to seek. Then one day while attending church services he heard one of the deacons reading from the Holy Bible. *"If you want to be 'perfect', go sell all you have give to the poor and come follow me"* (Matthew 19:21).



ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT — FATHER OF MONASTICISM

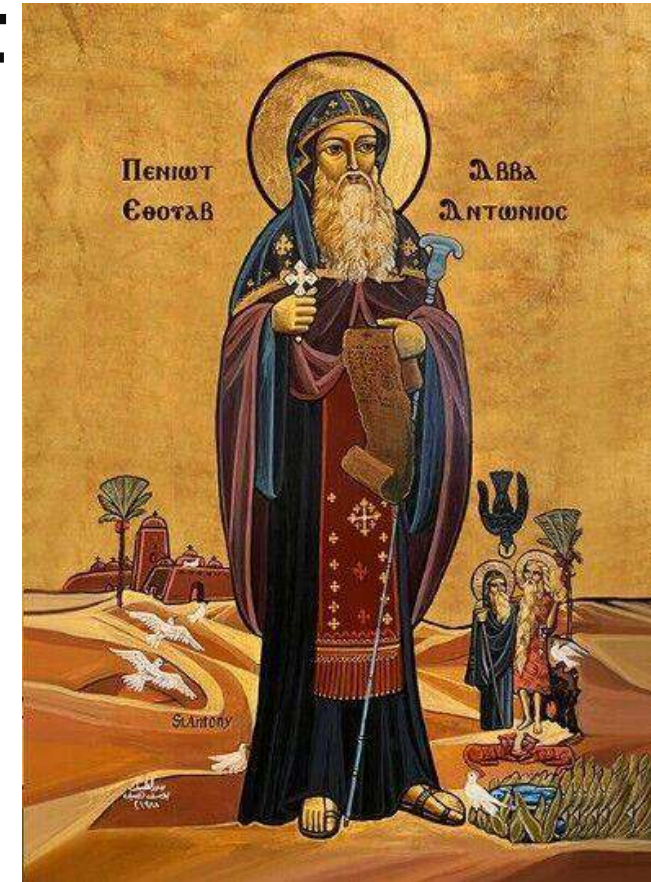
St. Anthony was a very serious listener and considered every word he heard as directed to him personally. The first person that heard these very words was another rich youth similar to St. Anthony, but when the first youth heard these words he was very sad. Although the first youth heard these words from the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the first youth's heart was not touched nor did he follow the Lord Jesus Christ because his love for money was stronger than his love to follow the Lord.

St. Anthony heard the very same words from a deacon in a church and immediately went and sold all his possessions and gave them to the poor. He took the Bible reading and this Divine commandment seriously because this was the manner in which he lived his life.

This was the second lesson St. Anthony would learn from another in his quest for spiritual perfection. This second lesson began his spiritual journey in which he would escape from the world.

The third lesson St. Anthony learned in his quest for spiritual closeness to the Lord was that of learning from many good examples. There were a number of ascetics living on the outskirts of his village. He learned quietness from one, humility from another, silence from the third, continuous prayers from the fourth, asceticism from the fifth, and keeping vigil from the sixth. He sought out the virtues in every person and learned from them. He did not imitate any one person but learned lessons from many.

The fourth and greatest lesson he learned was from a prostitute. While meditating by the Nile River, a woman came to bathe and undressed in front of him without any shame. He was very embarrassed and reprimanded her, he said, "Aren't you ashamed of being undressed in front of a monk?" She replied, "If you were a monk you would have gone to the mountain far into the desert because this place is not appropriate for a monk's residence. St. Anthony took her words as a lesson and said "truly God has spoken to me through this woman."



ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT — FATHER OF MONASTICISM

He immediately left that place and moved toward the desert. His moving was a blessing to the world. The woman's words did not make him angry or to seek revenge, rather he drew spiritual benefit from them.

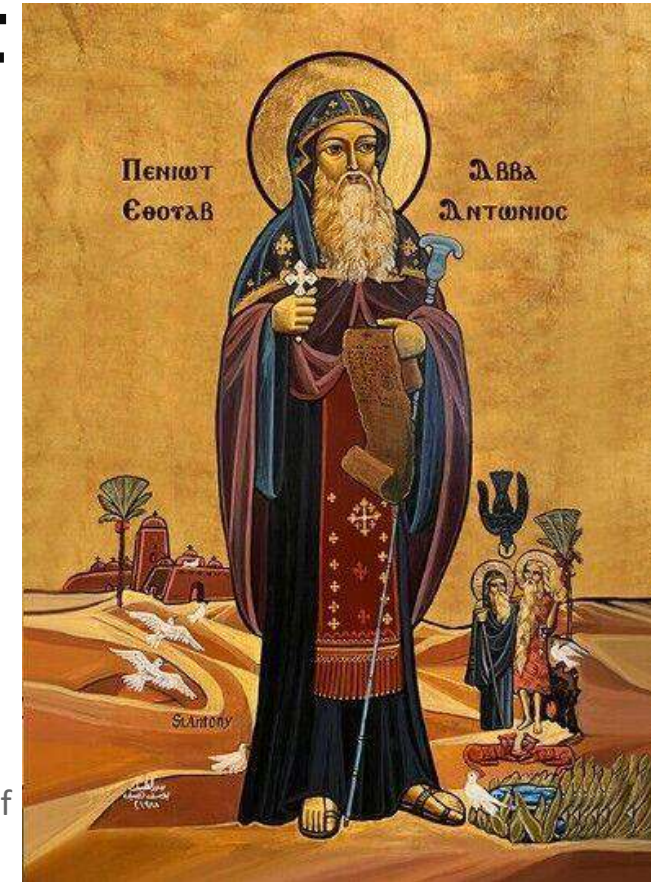
"To the pure, all things are pure" (Titus 1:15).

It has been told that St. Anthony's fasting and prayers took him deeper and deeper into the desert and into his spiritual life. Through the spiritual exercises of fasting and prayer he gained self-control. This self-control would prove invaluable in his life with his continuous battles with beasts of the desert, demons, and his own human weaknesses.

His reputation exceeded the boundaries of the desert and many sought this holy man's blessing. Although he sought solitude, he would teach those seeking his counsel why he chose the Lord Jesus; why he loved the Lord Jesus, and why ultimately he chose heaven and everlasting life. His example taught those seeking his wisdom to meditate on the scriptures not to rigidly interpret them.

Many admired and loved the kind of life he pursued. It has often been recorded that those who met this saint would find his face radiant with the love of the Lord. When St. Anthony met others he was filled with the spirit of compassion and humility. Many chose to seek this happiness he modeled and follow his way of life. Thus, the name he has been affectionately called throughout the centuries, "the Father of Monks".

St. Anthony died an earthly death in the year 356 AD at the age of 105 years. The two monks who buried him, Marcarius and Amatas, never revealed the place of his burial. As St. Anthony's existence was very humble so was his passing from this earthly life. Although this saint learned many lessons from others, he left this world with the greatest lesson of all, his example. He gave all to the Lord. But he received more than he gave. The land and property that now belong to the monasteries of St. Anthony greatly exceeds the 300 acres this saint had given up in Kammen El-Arous to follow the Lord. He gave up marriage and children. St. Anthony now has thousands of monk-sons throughout every generation that call him "father." Many of these sons became Popes and bishops. In addition, he has millions and millions of spiritual children such as you.



ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT — FATHER OF MONASTICISM

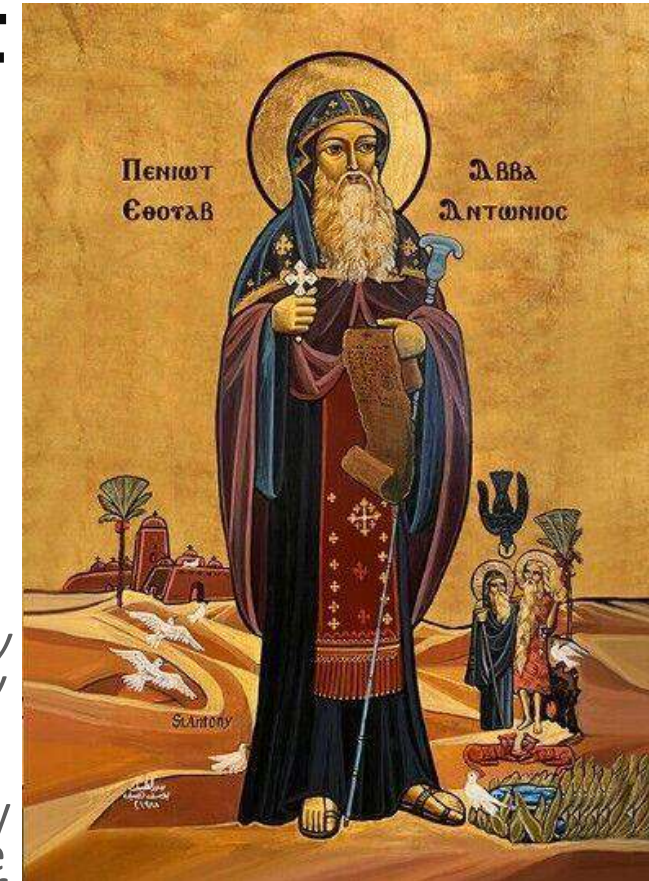
[LIFE OF ST ANTHONY BY ST ATHANASIUS \(smass.co.uk\)](http://smass.co.uk)

“If we make every effort to avoid death of the body, still more should it be our endeavor to avoid death of the soul. There is no obstacle for a man who wants to be saved other than negligence and laziness of soul.”

“Men are often called intelligent wrongly. Intelligent men are not those who are erudite in the sayings and books of the wise men of old, but those who have an intelligent soul and can discriminate between good and evil. They avoid what is sinful and harms the soul; and with deep gratitude to God they resolutely adhere by dint of practice to what is good and benefits the soul. These men alone should truly be called intelligent.”

“One should not say that it is impossible to reach a virtuous life; but one should say that it is not easy. Nor do those who have reached it find it easy to maintain. Those who are devout and whose intellect enjoys the love of God participate in the life of virtue; the ordinary intellect, however, is worldly and wavering, producing both good and evil thoughts, because it is changeful by nature and directed towards material things. But the intellect that enjoys the love of God punishes the evil which arises spontaneously because of man’s laziness.”

“Whoever has not experienced temptation cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Without temptations no-one can be saved.”



ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT — FATHER OF MONASTICISM

“What is slander? It is every sort of wicked word we would dare not speak in front of the person whom we are complaining about.”

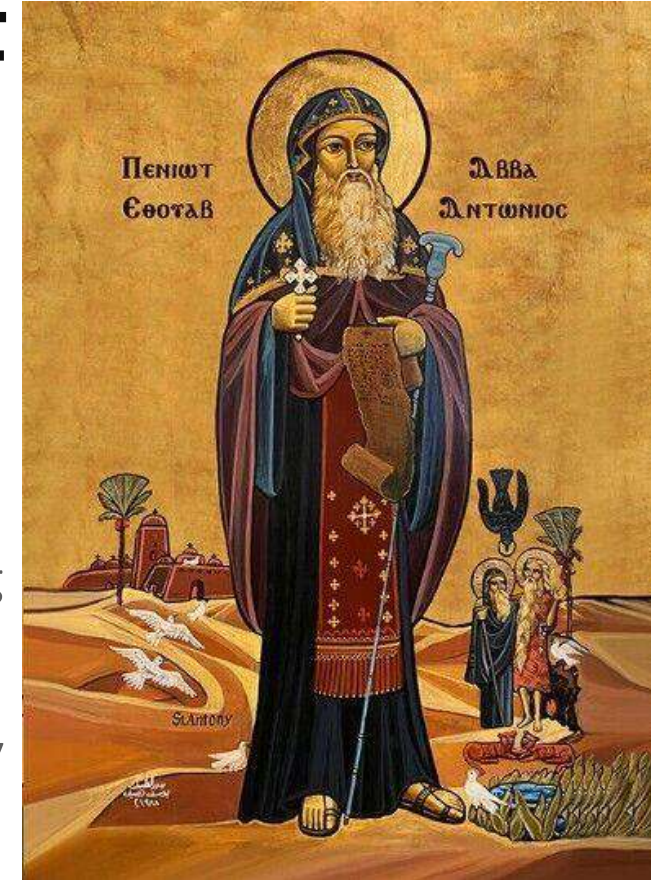
“This is the great work of man: always to take the blame for his own sins before God and to expect temptation to his last breath.”

“Do not have a single thing to do with schismatics and absolutely nothing with heretics . . . As you know I myself have avoided them due to their Christ hating and heterodox heresy.”

“The devil is afraid of us when we pray and make sacrifices. He is also afraid when we are humble and good. He is especially afraid when we love Jesus very much. He runs away when we make the Sign of the Cross.”

“One who knows oneself, knows God: and one who knows God is worthy to worship Him as is right. Therefore, my beloveds in the Lord, know yourselves.”

“Always have the fear of God before your eyes. Remember Him who gives death and lives. Hate the world and all that is in it. Hate the peace that comes from the flesh. Renounce this life, so that you may be alive to God.”



ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT — FATHER OF MONASTICISM

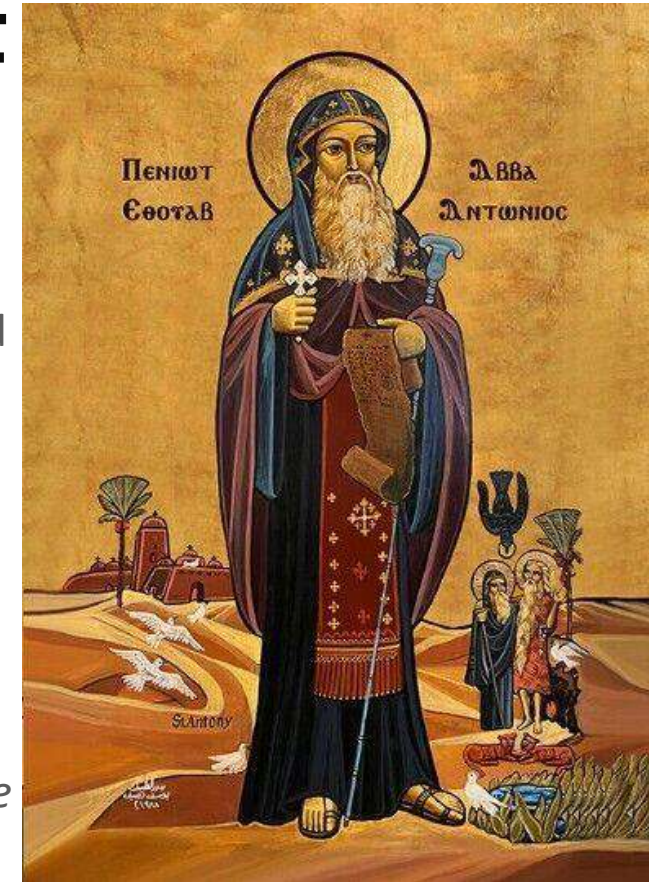
“Learn to love humility, for it will cover all your sins. All sins are repulsive before God, but the most repulsive of all is pride of the heart. Do not consider yourself learned and wise; otherwise, all your efforts will be destroyed, and your boat will reach the harbor empty. If you have great authority, do not threaten anyone with death. Know that, according to nature, you too are susceptible to death, and that every soul sheds its body as its final garment.”

“A time is coming when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him, saying, ‘You are mad; you are not like us.’”

“He who neglects the Son throws stones at the Father as well. For the Son Himself speaks of God in the Gospels that he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father.”

“As long as it [the human soul] is engulfed by winter of evil, she is barren and impossible to compare with others, remains dead and barren. But when it receives the Divine and understandable in the spiritual sense rain of verbal teaching, then the cold of evil ends: it discards the nasty clothes of many passions, warming itself with the word, and when it comes to life from Divine moisture and spiritual warmth, it brings forth fruit, according to God’s word: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.”

“The Holy Trinity teaches angels, angels teach people, and we teach those who are behind us.”



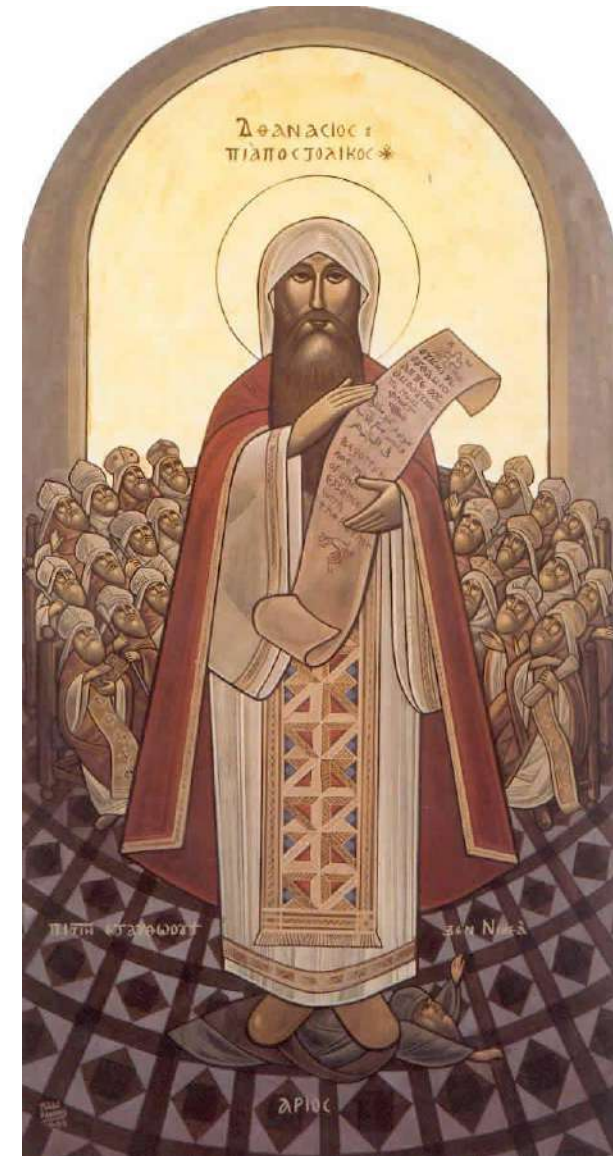
ST. ATHANASIUS THE APOSTOLIC

Saint Athanasius the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria, was a towering Father of the Church and a pillar of Orthodoxy.

He was born around the year 297 in the city of Alexandria into a family of pious Christians. He received a fine secular education, but he acquired more knowledge by diligent study of the Holy Scripture. In his childhood, the future hierarch Athanasius became known to Saint Alexander the Patriarch of Alexandria (May 29). A group of children, which included Athanasius, were playing at the seashore. The Christian children decided to baptize their pagan playmates.

The young Athanasius, whom the children designated as “bishop”, performed the Baptism, precisely repeating the words he heard in church during this sacrament. Patriarch Alexander observed all this from a window. He then commanded that the children and their parents be brought to him. He conversed with them for a long while, and determined that the Baptism performed by the children was done according to the Church order.

He acknowledged the Baptism as real and sealed it with the sacrament of Chrismation. From this moment, the Patriarch looked after the spiritual upbringing of Athanasius and in time brought him into the clergy, at first as a reader, and then he ordained him as a deacon.



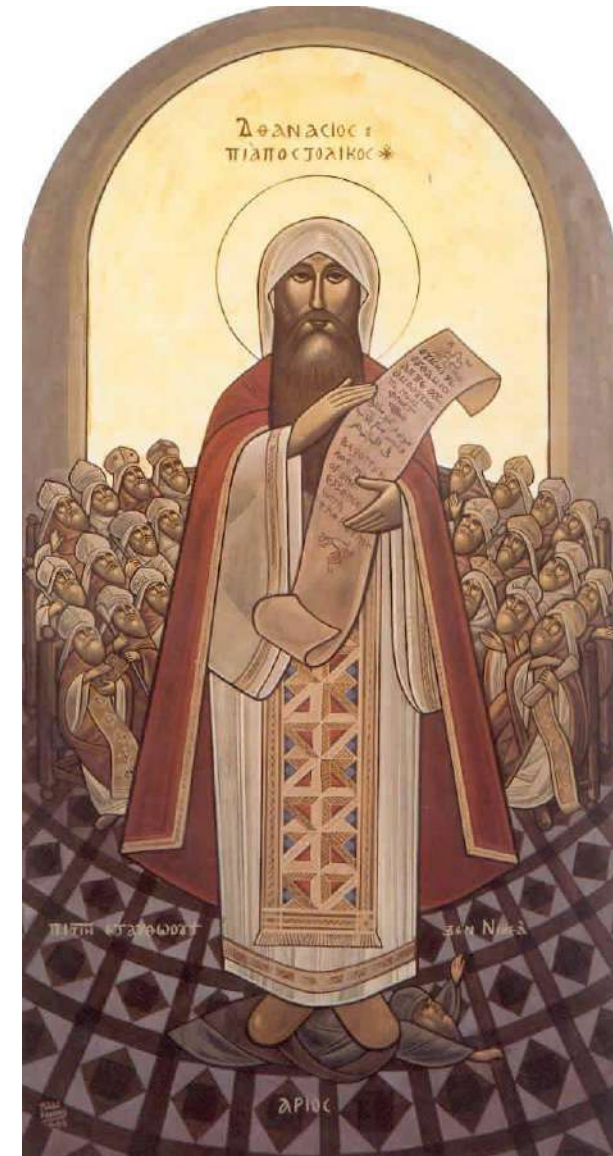
ST. ATHANASIUS THE APOSTOLIC

It was as a deacon that Saint Athanasius accompanied Patriarch Alexander to the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in the year 325. At the Council, Saint Athanasius refuted of the heresy of Arius, proposed the structure for the currently canonized books of the bible, and wrote the Nicene Creed.

After the death of holy Patriarch Alexander, Saint Athanasius was unanimously chosen as his successor in the See of Alexandria. He refused, accounting himself unworthy, but at the insistence of all the Orthodox populace that it was in agreement, he was consecrated bishop when he was twenty-eight, and installed as the archpastor of the Alexandrian Church. Saint Athanasius guided the Church for forty-seven years, and during this time he endured persecution and grief from his antagonists. Several times he was expelled from Alexandria and hid himself from the Arians in desolate places, since they repeatedly tried to kill him. Saint Athanasius spent more than twenty years in exile, returned to his flock, and then was banished again.

Contra Mundum: "Against the World"

Athanasius earned the epithet "Contra Mundum" (Against the World) due to his unwavering stand against Arianism, even when it seemed the entire world was against him. This stance is epitomized in his steadfast commitment to the doctrine of the Trinity and the full divinity of Christ, which were under relentless attack during his lifetime. His most famous theological work, "On the Incarnation," remains a cornerstone of Christian theology, articulating the necessity of Christ's divinity and incarnation for human salvation.



ST. ATHANASIUS THE APOSTOLIC

When Julian the Apostate (361-363) began a persecution against Christians, his wrath first fell upon Saint Athanasius, whom he considered a great pillar of Orthodoxy. Julian intended to kill the saint in order to strike Christianity a grievous blow, but he soon perished himself. Mortally wounded by an arrow during a battle, he cried out with despair: "You have conquered, O Galilean." After Julian's death, Saint Athanasius guided the Alexandrian Church for seven years and died in 373, at the age of seventy-six.

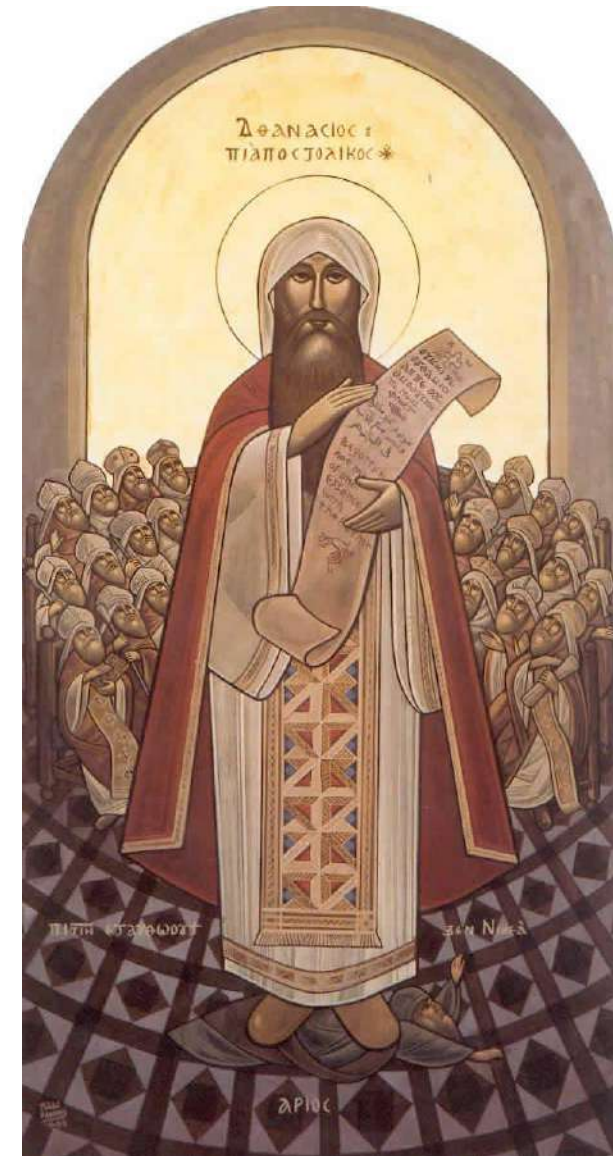
Numerous works of Saint Athanasius have been preserved; four Orations against the Arian heresy; also an Epistle to Epictetus, bishop of the Church of Corinth, on the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ; four Epistles to Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis, about the Holy Spirit and His Equality with the Father and the Son, directed against the heresy of Macedonius.

Other apologetic works in defense of Orthodoxy have been preserved, among which is the Letter to the Emperor Constantius. Saint Athanasius wrote commentaries on Holy Scripture, and books of a moral and didactic character, as well as a biography of Saint Anthony the Great (January 17), with whom Saint Athanasius was very close. Saint John Chrysostom advised every Orthodox Christian to read this Life.

Contributions to Monasticism

Athanasius also played a crucial role in the development of Christian monasticism. His biography of St. Anthony the Great, "The Life of Anthony," was instrumental in popularizing the monastic movement. This work not only provided a model of ascetic life but also portrayed monasticism as a path to spiritual perfection, influencing countless believers.

[The Complete Works of St. Athanasius \(20 Books\): Cross-Linked to the Bible \(archive.org\)](#)



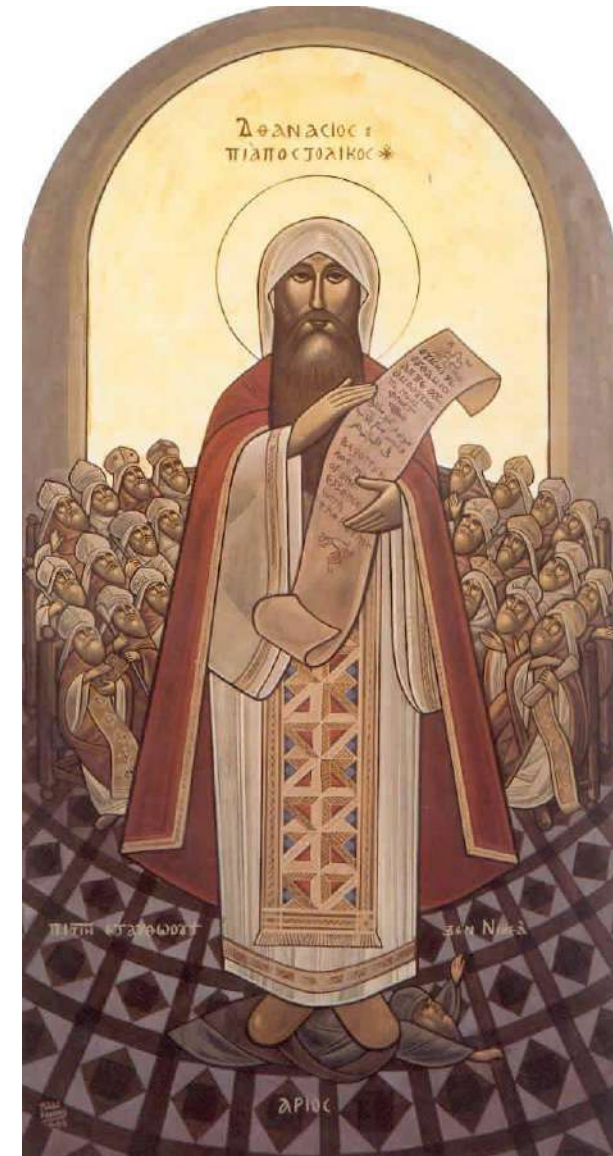
ST. ATHANASIUS THE APOSTOLIC

St. Athanasius' "On the Incarnation,"

On the Purpose of the Incarnation

"The Word of God, incorporeal, incorruptible and immaterial, came into our realm, although He was not far from us before. No part of creation is left void of Him: He has filled all things everywhere, remaining present with His own Father. But now He comes condescending towards us in His love for human beings and His manifestation. Seeing that rational creatures were perishing and that death reigned over them through corruption, and seeing also that the threat against transgression gave firm hold to the corruption which was upon us, and that it was monstrous that the promise of God should be broken, that we, who had been made in the image of God, should come to nothing, He took to Himself a body, a body no different from ours."

- **Reference:** St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, Chapter 2, Section 8.



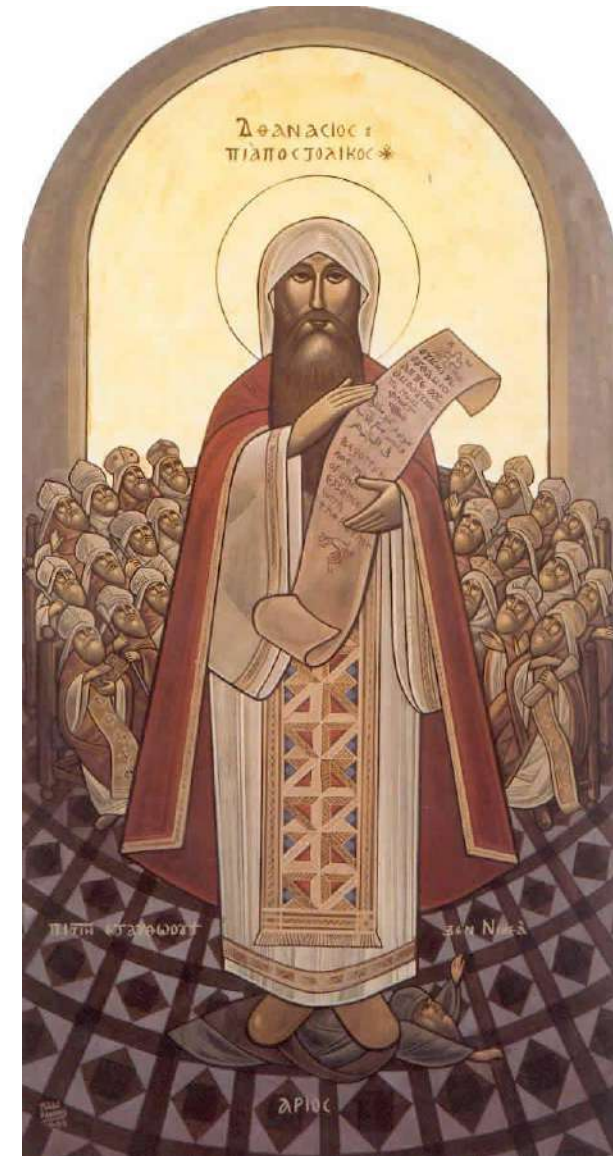
ST. ATHANASIUS THE APOSTOLIC

On the Victory Over Death

"For the Word, realizing that in no other way would the corruption of human beings be undone except simply by dying, though He was immortal and the Son of the Father, the Word took to Himself a body capable of death, in order that it, through participating in the Word who is above all, might be worthy to die in the stead of all, and might, because of the Word which had come to dwell in it, remain incorruptible, and that henceforth, corruption might be stayed from all by the grace of the resurrection.

Whence, by offering unto death the body He Himself had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from every stain, straightway He put away death from all His peers by the offering of an equivalent."

- **Reference:** St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, Chapter 2, Section 9.



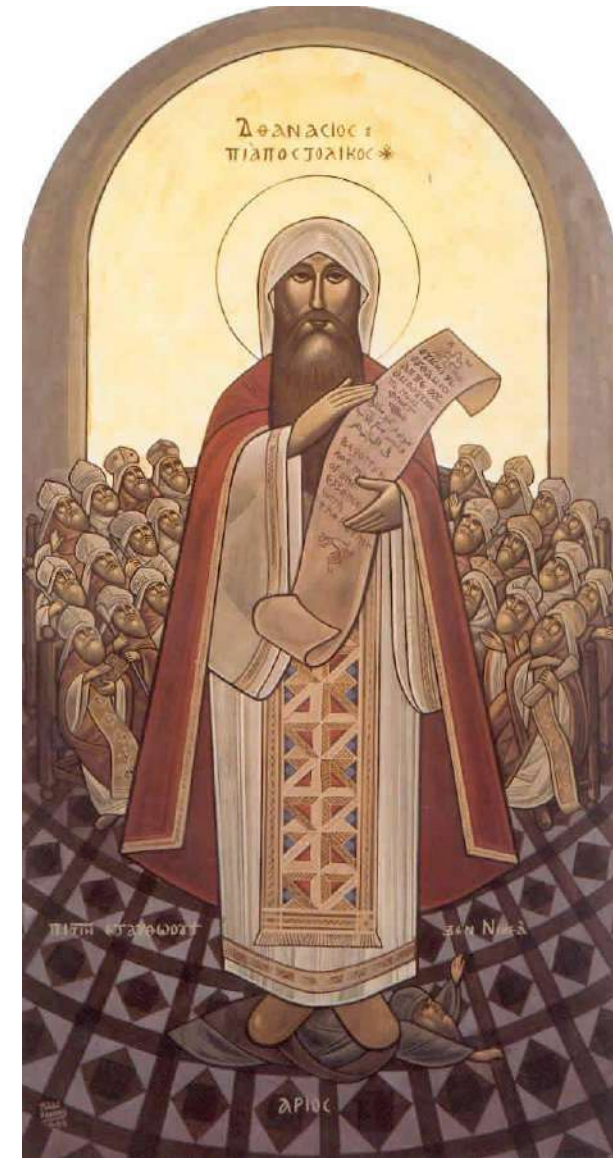
ST. ATHANASIUS THE APOSTOLIC

On the Restoration of Humanity

"For He was made man that we might be made God; and He manifested Himself by a body that we might receive the idea of the unseen Father; and He endured the insolence of men that we might inherit immortality. In short, that the Word should become man, and the Son of God the Son of man, is no worse than that man should be made God and a son of God."

Therefore, He endured to be born in a human body, and to walk among men, and to die, and to rise again, and to return to the heavens, that He might fulfil all that was needful, having suffered for our sakes, and having undone the corruption of human beings."

- **Reference:** St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, Chapter 8, Section 54.

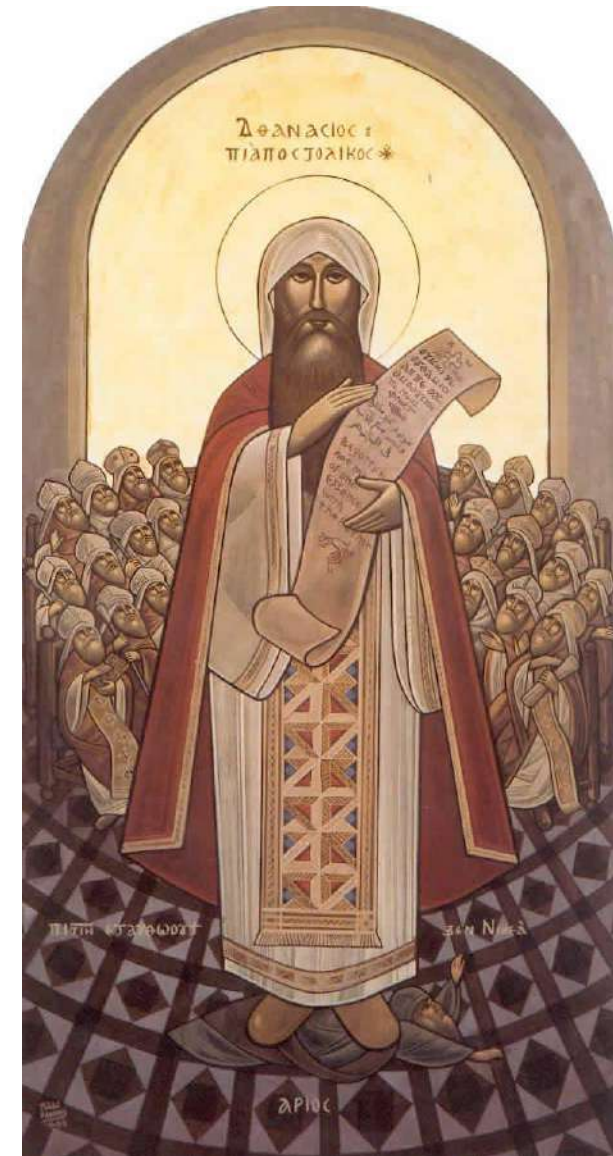


ST. ATHANASIUS THE APOSTOLIC

On the Defeat of Evil

"And thus taking from our bodies one of like nature, because all were under the penalty of the corruption of death, He gave it over to death in the stead of all, and offered it to the Father, doing this, moreover, of His loving-kindness, to the end that, firstly, all being held to have died in Him, the law involving the ruin of men might be undone (inasmuch as its power was fully spent in the Lord's body, and had no longer holding-ground against men, his peers), and that, secondly, whereas men had turned towards corruption, He might turn them again towards incorruption, and quicken them from death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of the resurrection, banishing death from them like straw from the fire."

- **Reference:** St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, Chapter 2, Section 8.

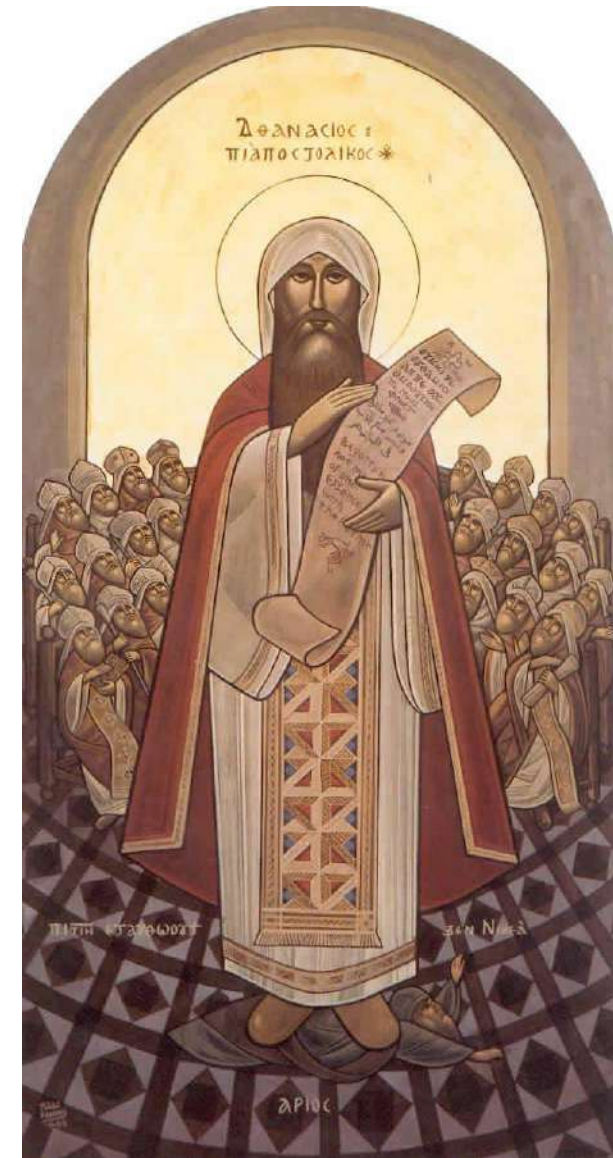


ST. ATHANASIUS THE APOSTOLIC

On the Divine Condescension

"The Savior of us all, the Word of God, in His great love took to Himself a body and moved as Man among men, meeting their senses, so to speak, halfway. He became Himself an object for the senses, so that those who were seeking God in sensible things might apprehend the Father through the works which He, the Word of God, did in the body. Human and human-minded as men were, therefore, to whichever side they looked in the sensible world, they found themselves taught the truth."

- **Reference:** St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, Chapter 15, Section 45.



THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

The Cappadocian Fathers were two brothers, **Basil** (c.330-379) (the Great) who was **bishop of Caesarea**, and **Gregory of Nyssa** (c.335-394), along with a friend, **Gregory of Nazianus** (c.329-389). Together, they made a strong stand for the Nicæan position of the divinity of Christ, against the Arianism which was prevalent in the Eastern Church.

St. Basil forsook his wealthy background to become a monk, but rejected the solitary life of a hermit, asking, “If you live alone, whose feet will you wash?”. Because of this, he organised communities of monks, where Bible study and confession played a major part of monastic life.

These communities became strongholds in the Eastern Church. In 370, St. Basil was appointed a bishop of Caesarea, an influential position also covering the areas of Pontus and Cappadocia. From this position, he was able to exert great influence for the Nicæan view in an Arian stronghold, even against the Arian emperor Valens. He was also able to use his influence and personal contacts to act as a mediator between the East and the West. As a writer, he made great advances in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, especially with his emphasis on the equality of the Father, Son and Spirit. His distinction between the one substance (**ousia**) and the three persons (**hypostatis**) in the Trinity was adopted at the Council of Constantinople in 381.



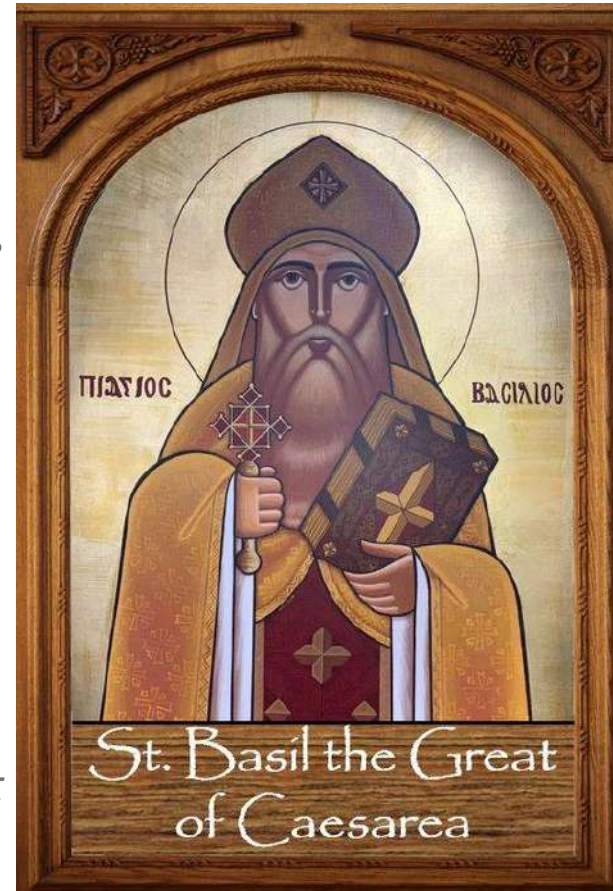
THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

The work of the Holy Spirit – From the Treatise on the Holy Spirit, 9

The titles given to the Holy Spirit must surely stir the soul of anyone who hears them, and make him realize that they speak of nothing less than the supreme Being. Is he not called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, the steadfast Spirit, the guiding Spirit? But his principal and most personal title is the Holy Spirit.

To the Spirit all creatures turn in their need for sanctification; all living things seek him according to their ability. His breath empowers each to achieve its own natural end.

The Spirit is the source of holiness, a spiritual light, and he offers his own light to every mind to help it in its search for truth. By nature the Spirit is beyond the reach of our mind, but we can know Him by his goodness. The power of the Spirit fills the whole universe, but He gives Himself only to those who are worthy, acting in each according to the measure of his faith.



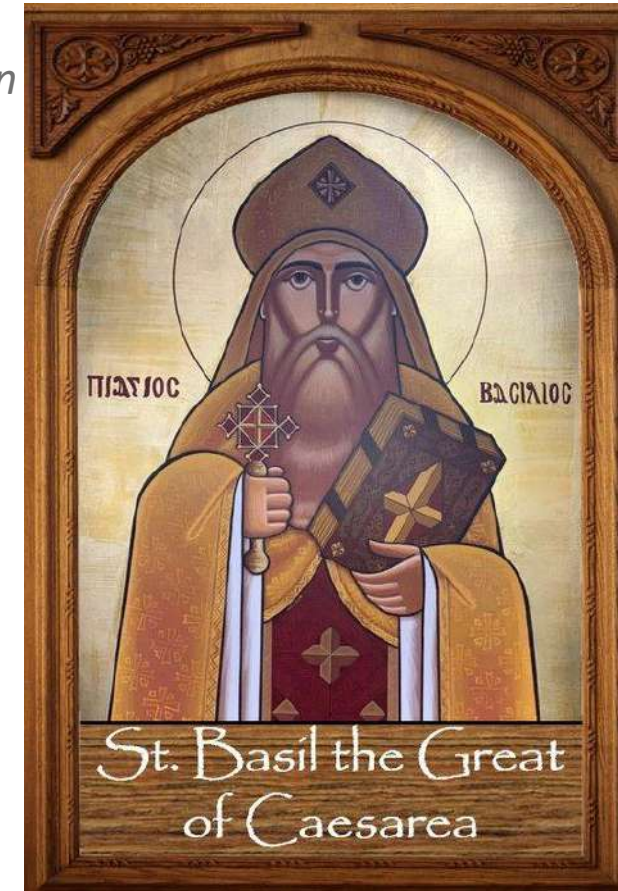
THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

Simple in himself, the Spirit is manifold in his mighty works. The whole of his being is present to each individual; the whole of his being is present everywhere. Though shared in by many, he remains unchanged; his self-giving is no loss to himself. Like the sunshine, which permeates all the atmosphere, spreading over land and sea, and yet is enjoyed by each person as though it were for him alone, so the Spirit pours forth his grace in full measure, sufficient for all, and yet is present as though exclusively to everyone who can receive him. To all creatures that share in him he gives a delight limited only by their own nature, not by his ability to give.

The Spirit raises our hearts to heaven, guides the steps of the weak, and brings to perfection those who are making progress. He enlightens those who have been cleansed from every stain of sin and makes them spiritual by communion with himself.

As clear, transparent substances become very bright when sunlight falls on them and shine with a new radiance, so also souls in whom the Spirit dwells, and who are enlightened by the Spirit, become spiritual themselves and a source of grace for others.

From the Spirit comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of the mysteries of faith, insight into the hidden meaning of Scripture, and other special gifts. Through the Spirit we become citizens of heaven, we enter into eternal happiness, and abide in God. Through the Spirit we acquire a likeness to God; indeed, we attain what is beyond our most sublime aspirations—we become God.



THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

Basil's younger brother, **Gregory of Nyssa**, was more of a philosopher, who excelled as a theologian over his older brother. He was an admirer of Origen, some of whose more extreme views and speculations he adopted, without however, being branded a heretic.

He was also a prolific writer, who also wrote much about the nature of the Trinity. He stated that the correct way to describe the Trinity was 'God in three persons', because their unity is seen in the fact that in whatever is done, all three operate together.



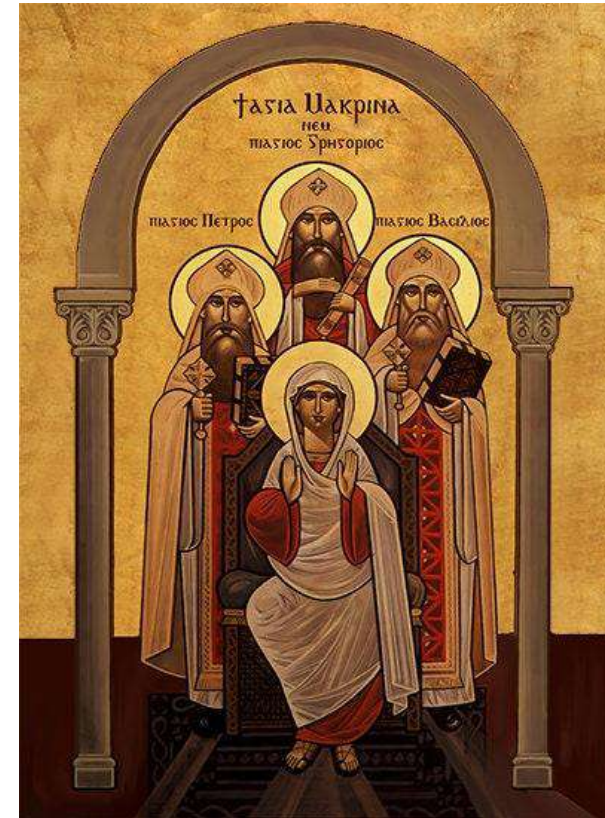
THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

Quotations from St. Gregory of Nyssa's "On the Making of Man," providing more context and depth for each of the previously mentioned themes:

On the Image of God

"For the image of the King is not imprinted upon human nature from without, but we have its archetype within ourselves, in the proper measure of our first creation. For as the power of God, to which all things are equally subject, is present to all, and pervades all, and encompasses all, so it was fitting that the being who was made to be a partaker of the divine nature should also have within himself the impression of that power. Thus, the Divine Mind first models man according to its own archetypal beauty, and to every one of us the excellence of the first creation is the pattern, as it were, of the new creation. This is the mode in which we are said to have been made in the image of God, that by this likeness to Him who created us we might be known. Thus, to live according to virtue, and to be in communion with the Divine Nature, is to participate in God."

- **Reference:** St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, Chapter 16.

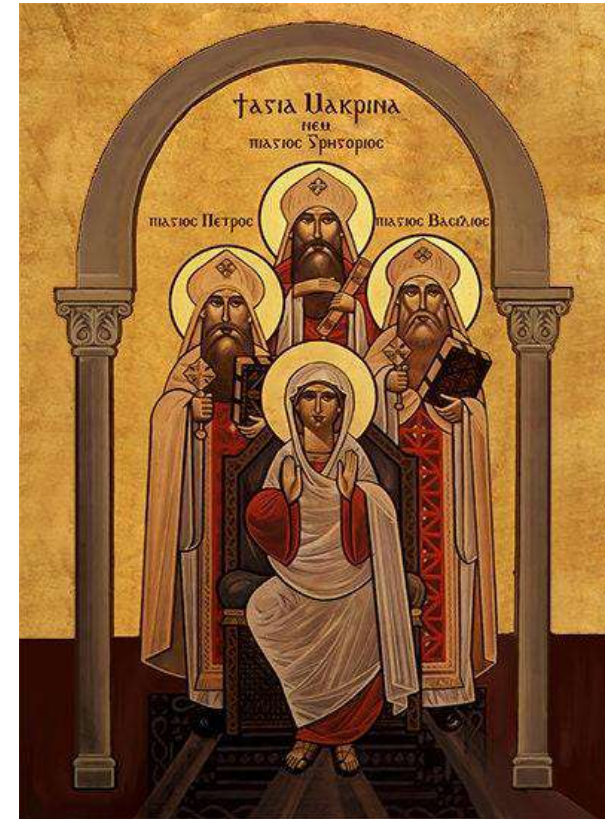


THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

On Human Dignity

"For it is necessary that we should first look upon the image of God in ourselves, and then form a conception of its Prototype. For as the painter who wishes to represent any one in colors looks at the pattern, and then carefully transferring the form to his work, exhibits in the copy the exact features of the original, so, to whatever extent the human virtue is conformed to the divine excellence, by so much does the beauty of the Archetype show itself in the image. Thus the greatness of the dignity of the image, which was at first in the original, passes over to the copy. But as the painter who has defaced the likeness with some blots of color restores the beauty of the original in his work by bringing the features again to their proper form, so also in us, when the divine image is defaced by the corruption of sin, the virtue which restores it comes again to the original form, for the first beauty is again produced by the cleansing of the blot."

- **Reference:** St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, Chapter 16.

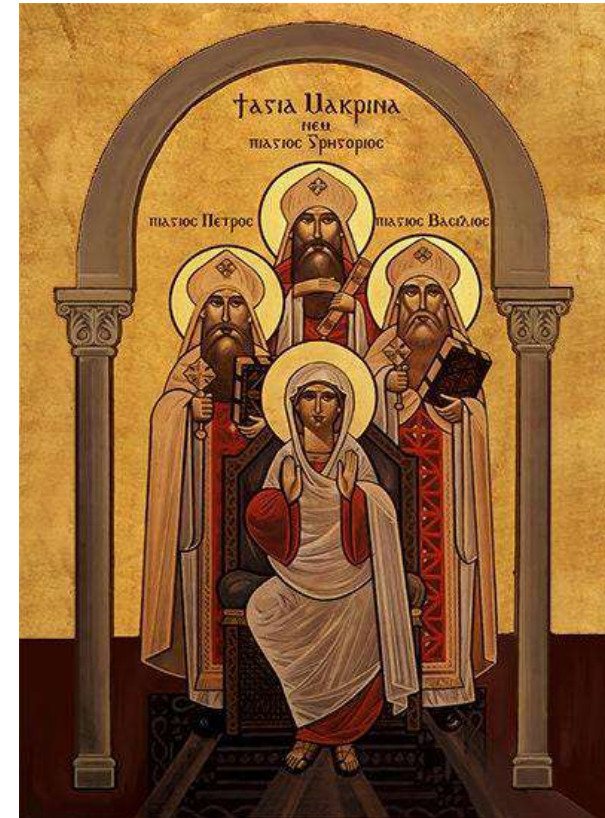


THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

On Theosis

"For the end of the life of virtue is the likeness of God, as far as it is attainable by human nature. The man who purifies himself from the evil stains of sin, and by means of such purgation comes to the unadulterated form of the Archetype, he it is who is truly a 'man' in Christ, by being pure from all falsehood and deception, and by having the truth itself imprinted upon his soul. Such a man has a true and complete participation in the divine nature, because the imitation of the true God has made him a god, being, in the unperverted meaning of the term, conformed to the image of the Son of God. For He says, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' (Matthew 5:48) The word shows that all the perfection and likeness to the Divine Majesty to which human nature can attain is summed up in this condition of purity from evil, by which alone the human nature is made capable of receiving the divine image."

- **Reference:** St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, Chapter 16.



THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

The third Cappadocian father was **Gregory of Nazianus**, who had been a close friend of Basil while they studied together in Athens. His father had been bishop of Nazianzus, but had signed the Arian creed of Selucia, which stimulated Gregory to make a detailed study of the issue. After many years of obscurity, including being appointed as bishop of the remote village of Sasima by Basil, he eventually and briefly became bishop of Constantinople in 381. He used his eloquence as a preacher as his greatest weapon to confute the Arians.

His most famous writing is his 'Five Orations', which included his doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This showed the distinctiveness of the Spirit, as well as stressing the unity of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, so describing the living richness of the Godhead.

Gregory is remembered as the greatest theologian and orator in the Eastern Church of his time. He was given the title 'The Divine', or 'The Theologian', which had only previously been given to John the Apostle.

Together, the Cappadocian Fathers are held in great esteem, especially by the Eastern churches, because of their work in defining the relationships within the Trinity, which have since been adopted as orthodox belief.



THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

From the Liturgy of the Coptic Orthodox Church of St. Gregory the Theologian

***Priest:** You, O my Master have turned for me the punishment into salvation. As a good shepherd you have sought the stray. As a true father, You laboured with me, who had fallen. You bandaged me with all the remedies, which lead to life. You are He who sent to me the prophets, for my sake, I the sick. You gave me the Law as an aid 59.*

You are He Who ministered to me salvation: when I transgressed Your Law. As a true Light, You dawned upon the strays and the ignorant.

You are He who exists at all times. You came to us upon the earth: You came to the womb of the Virgin. O You who cannot be contained; Being God. You did not consider it snatching to be equal with God.

But You emptied Yourself and took the form of a slave. You blessed my nature in Yourself. You fulfilled Your Law for me. You showed me the way to rise from my fall. You gave freedom to those who had been under the dominion of Hades. You cast away the curse of the law. You brought to naught sin in the flesh.



THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

You showed me the power of Your authority. You granted sight to the blind. You raised the dead from the graves⁶⁶. You raised up human nature through the word. You revealed to me the dispensation of Your tender compassions. You endured the injustice of the wicked. You gave Your back to scourging. You surrendered Your cheeks to slapping.

For my sake, O my Master, You did not turn Your face from the shame of spitting.

You came to the slaughter as a lamb, even to the cross. You revealed the great extent of Your care for me. You put to death my sin in Your tomb. You raised my first fruits up to heaven



THE CAPADOCIAN FATHERS

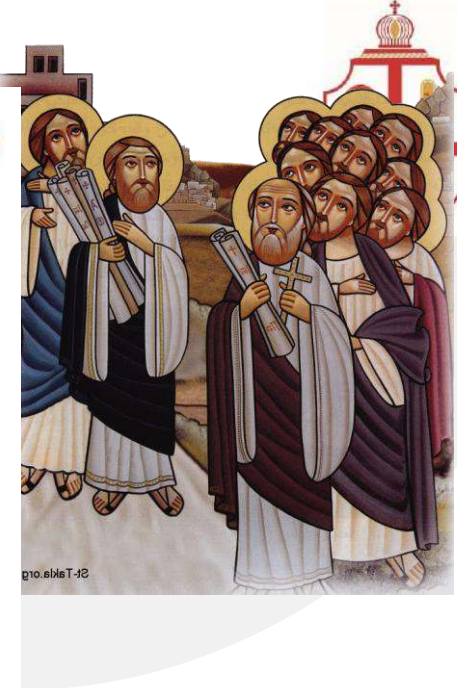
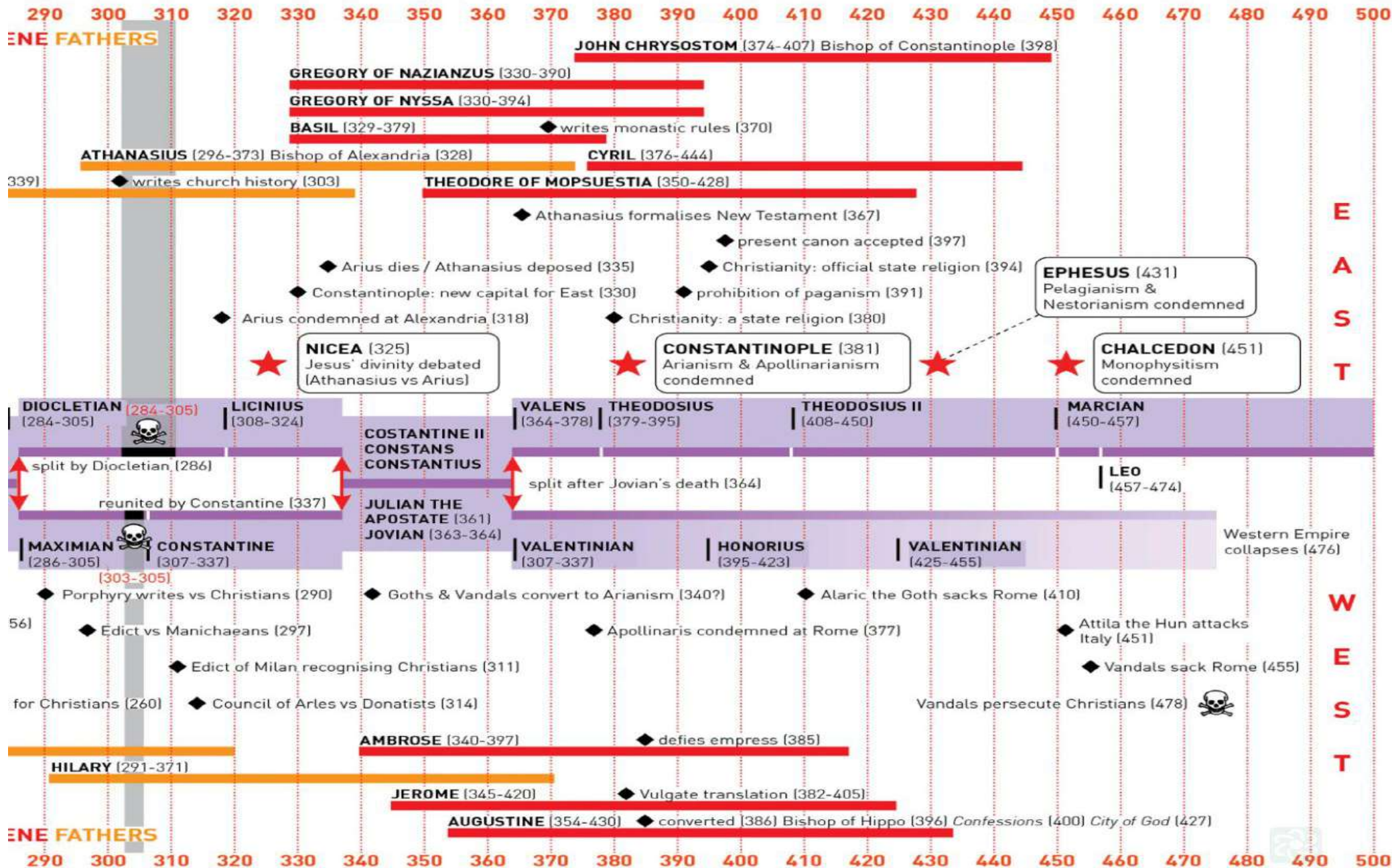
You revealed to me the advent of Your coming - In which You will come to judge the living and the dead, and to give each one according to his deeds.

I offer to You, O my Master the symbols of my freedom. I write my deeds in keeping with Your words. You are He who has given me this service which is full of mystery. You granted me to offer up of Your flesh in bread and wine.

For in the same night in which You gave Yourself up by Your own will and Your own authority

You took bread into Your holy, spotless, unblemished, blessed and life-giving hands.





THE SECOND STAGE II (390 AD-480 AD)

The **second part** extended from **360-480 AD**. During this division Orthodox doctrine and its teachings had become well established. The most famous of these writings were written by St Cyril the Great. St Cyril's writings were considered the best written of all the fathers before him. Therefore, St Cyril is considered the last of our Apostolic Fathers.

