

## Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen (Bishops and Doctors)

2 January



### About Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory Nazianzen

Saint Basil was born in the year 330 at Caesarea in Cappadocia, of a Christian family. He was a wonderful scholar and a virtuous man, who started by becoming a hermit. However, he was ordained bishop of Caesarea in the year 370. He encountered the Arian heresy and fought against it and wrote many notable works which developed the doctrines of the Incarnation and the divinity of the Holy Spirit. He was a pioneer of the monastic rule and wrote a rule which many monks in the Eastern Church follow to this day. He was very generous to the poor. He died in the year 379.

Saint Gregory Nazianzen was born in the year 330. He travelled wide in the pursuit of knowledge. He followed his friend Basil and became a hermit, but like Basil was also ordained a bishop. He was elected Bishop of Constantinople in 381 but because of factional fighting within the Church he retired to Nazianzus where he died on 25 January in the year 389 or 390. He is known as “Gregory the Theologian” in honour of his learning and eloquence. He was also a man of wisdom and acumen in maintaining orthodox doctrine against the Arians.

### What can we learn from Saints Basil and Gregory?

These men celebrate their feast day together because of their friendship here on earth and because of their enduring influence on the Church especially in the East.

Both Basil and Gregory used their academic abilities to foster knowledge among the people of **God and instruct them. They didn't keep their knowledge as a private treasure.**

In life we all need a balance between quiet and noise, between spending time alone and with others. Constant quiet does not enrich our lives and constant noise does not allow for us to process anything or think. Likewise, if we are on our own all the time we don't create friendships, but if we are with others all the time that doesn't allow us time to do what we need to do for ourselves.

Basil and Gregory sought the life of peace and quiet as hermits. God had other plans for them, giving them the responsibility of being Bishops. It is perhaps when we have served the needs of others and just need a few minutes of quiet that others need us. We need to do our best to accept that invitation and show them God's love by our willingness to attend to them and their needs.

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### Collect

O God, who were pleased to give light to your Church by the example and teaching of the Bishops Saints Basil and Gregory, grant, we pray, that in humility we may learn your truth and practice it faithfully in charity. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Gospel

The greatest among you must be your servant

Matthew 23:8-12

Jesus said to his disciples,  
**'You must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi,**  
since you have only one master, and you are all brothers.  
You must call no one on earth your father,  
since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven.  
Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers,  
for you have only one Teacher, the Christ.  
The greatest among you must be your servant.  
Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled,  
**and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted.'**

### Antiphon

We proclaim Christ crucified;  
Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

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## Hymn for the Memorial of Saints Basil and Gregory

O Saints Gregory and Basil,  
to the wilderness you went,  
hoping you would find some quiet  
and all noise to circumvent.  
You did teach that Jesus Christ  
is both human and divine.

From your chosen life as hermits,  
**you were called to lead God's sheep,**  
teaching daily by your writing,  
with a faith profound and deep.  
You did teach that Jesus Christ  
is both human and divine.

Your lives never would be easy,  
combatting a heresy:  
**teaching Christ's nature was twofold,**  
as the Council did decree.  
You did teach that Jesus Christ  
is both human and divine.

In those times when we need quiet,  
but must serve those with a need,  
may we follow the example  
of these men who showed no greed.  
We believe that Jesus Christ  
is both human and divine.

Text: Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono  
Tune: Irby

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