



St. Basil the Great “Author of the Divine Liturgy”

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The Coptic Church celebrates the departure of St Basil, Bishop of Caesaria on the sixth day of the blessed month of Tubah. Saint Basil was born in the year 329 A.D. of a good Christian family. His parents had five children, three of whom were bishops, including St Basil. All of the children lived in holiness all of their lives.

St Basil went to Athens for his education and was distinguished for brilliancy of mind and seriousness of character. He studied the most advanced courses of his time, including rhetoric, grammar, philosophy, astronomy, geometry, and medicine.

In 358 A.D., he abandoned the world and all its vain glories. He traveled to the desert of Egypt and visited the monasteries where he was greatly influenced by the monastic life. When he returned back to Pontus, his homeland, he withdrew to a beautiful spot and devoted himself to prayer and study. As the Lord had spoken to his



*St Basil the Great
“Sing Praises to the Lord,
O You, His Saints.”
(Preparatory).*

disciples, “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Many people gathered around St Basil to learn and benefit from his life of total devotion to the Lord.

In 362 A.D. St Basil was prompted to the life of priesthood, and eight years later he was ordained “Metropolitan” of Caesaria of Cappadocia. The Lord said, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few” (Luke 10:2).

St Basil had defended the Orthodox Faith with a brave heart and attentive mind against the heresies of his time. Among St Basil’s great contributions to the Christian faith is his collaboration with St Athanasius (296-373 AD), the 20th Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt in the fight against Arianism and in defending the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ’s Divinity.

As a result, St Basil and his diocese suffered severely from



the hostility of the imperial government. Emperor Valens wanted to sign an order to exile St Basil. He tried three times to sign this order and each time the pen broke in the emperors' hand. Finally, the emperor tore the paper and let the saint shepherd his flock and manage his church in peace.

St Basil was filled with the Holy Spirit. In addition to several homilies and letters, he wrote the Divine Liturgy that is named after him and is the one most commonly used in the Coptic Orthodox Churches today. The Basilian Liturgy was established at the end of the fourth century. It drew heavily from that of St Mark the Evangelist, the founder of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt. The Basilian Liturgy is addressed to God the Father.

God performed many miracles through St Basil's hands. The Coptic Orthodox Church commemorates a great miracle performed by his hands on the thirteenth day of the blessed month of Tute. The miracle centered upon a young man who loved his master's daughter and wanted to marry her. He went to a magician seeking help. The magician made him write a covenant to deny his Christian faith and surrender completely as a servant to Satan. Satan kindled lust in the heart of the boy and he complied.

After some time, the girl noticed that her husband did not pray or mention the good name of God. She confronted her husband and he told her about the written covenant to Satan. She took her husband to

St Basil and told him about the covenant he had signed. The saint comforted him and asked him to stay with him for a while in seclusion, fasting and praying. Satan charged a viscous war against the young man in seclusion, but he saw in a dream that St Basil was fighting for him.

After forty days in seclusion, the Saint Basil gathered the priests and the monks and they prayed for the young man the entire night. On the following morning, St Basil led the young man into the church while everyone was crying, "Lord have mercy on us." They continued to cry out until the actual written covenant fell down in the midst of all the people. The young man was set free from the bondage of Satan by the earnest prayers of St Basil. For the Lord said, "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:24). The whole congregation rejoiced exceedingly.

St Basil departed on 379 A.D. after he attended his flock faithfully.

St Basil the Great was a vivid example of a truly, faithful shepherd. He defended the Orthodox Faith bravely by refusing the doctrine of the heretics. St Basil suffered a great deal from the conspiracies aimed against him until the last day of his life. May God give us a zealous heart to protect and preach our Orthodox Faith.