

## Reflection Saturday St Basil Great and St Gregory Nazianzen 2021

St Basil was born in 330 at Caesarea in Cappadocia (Central Turkey), of a Christian family. A brilliant scholar and a virtuous man, he originally became a hermit but was made bishop of Caesarea in 370. He fought against the Arians and wrote many notable works, in particular the monastic rule that bears his name and which many monks in the East follow to this day. He was also generous to the poor. He died on 1<sup>st</sup> January 379.

**St Gregory** was born in 330, near Nazianzus (Asiatic Turkey). He travelled widely in search of knowledge. He followed his friend Basil into the wilderness, but he too was ordained and later made a bishop. He was elected Bishop of Constantinople in 381 but because of the factional fighting within the Church he retired to Nazianzus, where he died on 25<sup>th</sup> January 389 or 390. He is known as “Gregory the Theologian” in honour of his learning and eloquence.

St Paul implores us *to lead lives worthy of our vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds us together.* (Eph 4)

Both Gregory and Basil sought lives of contemplation and prayer but were exalted to the role of Bishop and had a marked influence on the development of the Church in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. They allowed God to work in and through them not for their own glory but for the glory of God, for the truth. They stand before us at the beginning of the New Year as models to follow; to allow the Word of God to work in us and through us. They remind us of the special importance we need to give to prayer and reflection. Be inspired by St Basil:

— *“A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love.”*

— *“I want creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that everywhere, wherever you may be, the least plant may bring to you the clear remembrance of the Creator. If you see the grass of the fields, think of human nature, and remember the comparison of the wise Isaiah. “All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.”*

— *“Everyone is a theologian, even those who have stains on their souls.”*

— *“The radiance of divine beauty is altogether beyond the power of words to describe.”*

- *What do you call a paper airplane that can't fly? Stationary!*
- *An anteater walks into a bar and the bartender asks,  
“Can I get you a drink?” “Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!” The anteater replies.  
“How about something to eat?” “Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!” The anteater replies.  
“What about some peanuts?” “Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!” The anteater replies.  
Frustrated, the bartender cries, “What’s with the long no’s!?”*