

## **Reflection Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> Week Easter St Basil the Great 2023**

St Basil the Great, or Basil of Caesarea, was one of the Cappadocian Fathers along with his younger brother, St Gregory of Nyssa, and St Gregory Nazianzen. Active after the Council of Nicaea, they formulated the Trinitarian doctrine by pinning down the meaning and role of the Holy Spirit. Basil was the leader and organizer; Gregory of Nazianzus was the thinker, orator and poet, pushed into administrative and episcopal roles by circumstances and by Basil. Gregory of Nyssa, was the most gifted of the three as a philosopher and theologian. They hammered out the doctrine of the Trinity like blacksmiths forging a piece of metal by hammer-blows into its final shape. They were successful champions of orthodoxy against Arianism. In addition to his role in doctrinal development, Basil is also the father of Eastern monasticism. He moderated the heroic ascetic practices and characteristics of earlier monastic life, to the point where they could be part of a life in which work, prayer and ascetic practices could live in harmonious balance. Knowledge of Basil's work and Rule spread to the West and was an influence on the founding work of St Benedict.

Like the Cappadocian Fathers, Paul worked tirelessly for the spread of the Gospel in a language that they could understand and appreciate. We encounter him as he prepares to go to Jerusalem before being taken to Rome. Even there, under house arrest, he was able to continue preaching the Gospel for two more years.