

ST. GREGORY: DEFENDER OF THE FAITH

When the “age of persecution” ended, the Church faced challenges to her very existence from an unlikely direction: from within! False teaching and misrepresentations of the theological truths that are now so dear to us threatened to divide and destroy the Christian Church long before its sacred mission could be fulfilled.

Fortunately, the Church was blessed with powerful and eloquent “voices of reason,” who were able to brilliantly speak out and defend the Faith against all forms of heresy. **ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA** was one of the strongest supporters of Holy Orthodoxy.

St. Gregory was the brother of **St. Basil the Great**, another well-known Church Father. As a clergyman, he distinguished himself as a preacher and a scholar. Upon the death of his wife, Gregory was consecrated as Bishop of Nyssa. During this time, the Church was shaken by the heretical movement of a priest from Alexandria named Arius, who claimed that Christ was **CREATED** by God the Father and, therefore **NOT EQUAL** to the Father, as our Lord Himself proclaimed. This was seen as undermining the important doctrines of the Holy Trinity and of salvation through Jesus Christ.

When the Emperor Valens, a follower of Arius, came into power in 374 A.D., he removed Gregory from his episcopal seat and banished him from the region. Upon the death of the Emperor, Gregory returned to his position in Nyssa and, along with his famous brother, Basil the Great, brought about the defeat of Arius and his false teachings once and for all. He was a vocal participant in the 2nd Ecumenical Council, which was held in Constantinople in 381 A.D. He will always be remembered for standing up for the Faith in a firm and unwavering manner.