

**A REMARKABLE WOMAN OF FAITH**

Perhaps the most remarkable family in all of Christendom was that of St. Basil the Elder and St. Emmelia, who lived in the early fourth century in the land of Cappadocia, Asia Minor ( today's Turkey). Both sons and daughters of this pious family are listed among the illustrious saints of the Church.

The eldest of the daughters was ST. MACRINA. It was this woman who had a profound influence on her brother, St. Basil the Great, one of the giant Hierarchs of Christianity. She was a woman of beauty and brains, as well as profound piety and faith in Christ. She was engaged to be married, but the young man died suddenly, and this turns of events was to influence the remaining course of her life.

St. Macrina turned the family estate into a center of Christian life. The poor and disadvantaged found a refuge there; she got help from her brothers and sisters to establish an orphanage and a hospital; she gathered about herself dedicated women to serve the needs of the community in the name of the Lord. The place was a virtual lighthouse, shining with the light of Christ in a dark and sinful world.

But St. Macrina was not only great in the management of this Christian enterprise, she excelled as well in the knowledge and understanding of Holy Scripture and the theology of the faith. It is said that she knew much of the Bible by memory and was able to help people in distress by explaining passages of Holy Writ.

What an example this family is for our day, when destructive forces have eroded the structure of family life. It would help to acquaint ourselves with these Christians of an era long since past, but whose lives shine with Christian virtue to inspire us in our journey through life. St. Macrina fell asleep in Christ in the year 379.