

Three Holy Hierarchs

The Three Hierarchs



Icon for the feast day of the [Synaxis](#) of the Three Hierarchs

Fathers Among the Saints

Born	330 (Basil) 349 (John) 329 (Gregory)
Died	379 (Basil) 407 (John) 389 (Gregory)
Venerated in	Eastern Orthodoxy , Eastern Catholic Churches
Feast	January 30
Attributes	Vested as bishops, wearing omophoria ; raising right hand in blessing; holding Gospel Books or scrolls

The **Three Hierarchs** ([Ancient Greek](#): Οἱ Τρεῖς Ἱεράρχαι; [Greek](#): Οἱ Τρεῖς Ἱεράρχες) of [Eastern Christianity](#) refers to [Basil the Great](#) (also known as Basil of Caesarea), [Gregory the Theologian](#) (also known as Gregory of Nazianzus) and [John Chrysostom](#). They were highly influential [bishops](#) of the [early church](#) who played pivotal roles in shaping [Christian theology](#). In [Eastern Christianity](#) they are also known as the Three Great [Hierarchs](#) and Ecumenical Teachers, while in [Roman Catholicism](#) the three are honored as [Doctors of the Church](#). The three are venerated as [saints](#) in [Eastern Orthodoxy](#), [Catholicism](#), [Anglicanism](#) and other Christian churches.

Origins of the term^[edit]

Disputes raged in 11th century [Constantinople](#) about which of the three hierarchs was the greatest. Some argued that Basil was superior to the other two because of his explanations of Christian faith and monastic example. Supporters of John Chrysostom countered that the "Golden Mouthed" ([Greek](#): Χρυσόστομος) [archbishop of Constantinople](#) was unmatched in both eloquence and in bringing sinners to repentance. A third group insisted that Basil's close friend, Gregory the Theologian, was preferred to the others due to the majesty, purity and profundity of his [homilies](#) and his defense of the faith from the [Arian](#) heresy. All three have separate [feast days](#) in January: Basil on January 1, Gregory on January 25, and Chrysostom on January 27. The Eastern Churches teach that the three hierarchs appeared together in a vision to St. [John Mauropous](#), bishop of [Euchaita](#), in the year 1084, and said that they were equal before God: "There are no divisions among us, and no opposition to one another." As a result, a January 30 feast day commemorating all three in common was instituted around 1100 under the [Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos](#).^[u]