

Saturday Saints- #54

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Many months have passed, but once again we are back to the letter A when it comes to saints. Today's saint is an early one who is well regarded by the Western and Eastern Churches, and for good reason. The saint for today is Saint Athanasius, one of the most important saints in the history of the Faith:

Saint **Athanasius of Alexandria** (/ˌæθəˈneɪfəs/; Greek: Ἀθανάσιος Ἀλεξανδρείας, *Athanásios Alexandriás*; c. 296–298 – 2 May 373), also called **Athanasius the Great**, **Athanasius the Confessor** or, primarily in the Coptic Orthodox Church, **Athanasius the Apostolic**, was the twentieth bishop of Alexandria (as **Athanasius I**). His episcopate (because of the importance of the see, considered an archbishopric by Rome, the Coptic papacy, or an Orthodox patriarchate) lasted 45 years (c. 8 June 328 – 2 May 373), of which over 17 were spent in five exiles ordered by four different Roman emperors. Athanasius is a renowned Christian theologian, a Church Father, the chief defender of Trinitarianism against Arianism, and a noted Egyptian leader of the fourth century.

Conflict with Arius and Arianism as well as successive Roman emperors shaped Athanasius' career. In 325, at the age of 27, Athanasius began his leading role against the Arians as his bishop's assistant during the First Council of Nicaea. Roman emperor Constantine the Great had convened the council in May–August 325 to address the Arian position that the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, is of a distinct substance from the Father. Three years after that council, Athanasius succeeded his mentor as archbishop of Alexandria. In addition to the conflict with the Arians (including powerful and influential Arian churchmen led by Eusebius of Nicomedia), he struggled against the Emperors Constantine, Constantius II, Julian the Apostate and Valens. He was known as "*Athanasius Contra Mundum*".

Nonetheless, within a few years of his departure, St. Gregory of Nazianzus called him the "*Pillar of the Church*". His writings were well regarded by all Church fathers who followed, in both the West and the East, who noted their rich devotion the Word-become-man, great pastoral concern, and profound interest in monasticism. Athanasius is counted as one of the four great Eastern Doctors of the Church in the Roman Catholic Church. In Eastern Orthodoxy, he is labeled the "Father of Orthodoxy". Some Protestants label him "Father of The Canon".

Athanasius is venerated as a Christian saint, whose feast day is 2 May in Western Christianity, 15 May in the Coptic Orthodox Church, and 18 January in the other Eastern Orthodox Churches. He is venerated by the Roman Catholic Church, Oriental and Eastern Orthodox churches, the Lutherans, and the Anglican Communion.

Much, much more can be found about this pivotal saint in his wiki, located [here](#).



St. Athanasius

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