

January 13

Christ with the Eastern and Western fathers

Ilarius of Poitiers (ca. 315-367) pastor

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Today the Western churches commemorate Ilarius, bishop of Poitiers.

He was born around the year 315, but almost nothing is known about his childhood. He grew up in a pagan environment and must have read widely, as it was soon clear that he was engaged in a passionate search for truth. By studying Scripture he came to faith, and all of his works reflect his thorough knowledge and assimilation of biblical texts.

Ilarius was elected bishop of Poitiers, but was exiled to Asia Minor from 356 to 359 because of the ardor with which he fought the spread of Arianism. In exile he wrote his *De Trinitate* in defense of Christ's divinity, and this remains his most comprehensive and penetrating theological work. While in Asia he also discovered the range of highly nuanced positions that characterized the christological controversies then raging in the East, and he shared what he had learned with all of the West. Because of the subtlety of his expression and the breadth of his understanding of the problems posed by the Nicene Council, Ilarius can be considered one of the creators of Western theological language, together with Tertullian and Novatian.

In exile he refined his exegetical methods by reading the works of Origen, and once back in the West he began to write a precious commentary on the Psalms, which he left unfinished.

Ilarius died around the year 367, after having fought at the side of Eusebius of Vercelli against Aenselms, the Arian bishop of Milan.

BIBLICAL READINGS

1 Jn 2:18-25; Mt 11:25-30

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:

Ilarius, bishop of Poitiers, teacher of the faith

Kentigern (d. 603), missionary bishop in Strathclyde and Cumbria

George Fox (d. 1691), founder of the Society of Friends (Quakers)

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Ilarius, bishop and doctor of the church (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (4 tubah/terr):

John, apostle and evangelist

Detachment of Takla Haymanot's foot (d. 1313)

Liqanos (5th-6th cent.), monk

Nardos of Bizan (Ethiopian Church)

LUTHERANS:

Ilarius of Poitiers, bishop in Gaul

MARONITES:

James of Nisibi (d. 338), confessor

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Hermylus and Stratonice of Singidunum (Belgrade; d. 315), martyrs

Sabaia (11th cent.), monk (Georgian Church)

OLD CATHOLICS:

Ilarius of Poitiers, bishop