

## St Hilary of Poitiers (c 315- c 368) 13 January

Hilary (his name means "cheerful") was born at Poitiers in France (then Gaul) to wealthy pagan parents, and only became a Christian in his 30s after a long period of study. His wife and daughter were baptized at the same time. His grounding in Greek and the convictions which he then had, led to him being an active campaigner against the Arians and in around 353 he was chosen as a bishop.



14<sup>th</sup> c mss – Hilary consecrated as Bishop of Poitiers

The term "Arian" derived from the presbyter Arius from Egypt (c 256 – 336) was generally applied to those who regarded Christ as a created being, thus denying God as Trinity, and controversy over this split the Church from the 320s to the 380s. Since a number of the Roman emperors were Arians, Hilary's advocacy of orthodox theology – and perhaps also political polemics - led to him being exiled in Phrygia (eastern Turkey) for four years, where he wrote a major text "On the Trinity" Although in person Hilary is described as being "gentle, courteous and friendly" his surviving writing is severe - indeed he is referred to as "the hammer of the Arians" - reflecting the tensions aroused by the dispute.



This Orthodox icon depicts the bishops and Emperor Constantine at the Council of Nicea (325) with Arius under their feet. (Although Hagia Sophia, the church depicted in the background, was not built until the 6<sup>th</sup> c it is regarded as a symbol of Orthodoxy. In 1453 it was converted into a mosque, until it became a museum in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. It has recently been reopened as a mosque.

## St Sava (1174 – 1236) 14<sup>th</sup> January

Sava – his name as a monk – is dubbed “the Enlightener” or “the Illuminator” from his extremely important role in Serbia. The son of a Serbian prince, he became a monk at Mt Athos in 1192. He not only became the first Serbian Archbishop, and wrote the first independent constitution for the country, he persuaded his parents to give up rule and enter a monastery, and intervened successfully when his brothers fell out over the succession to the throne.

Most of Sava’s life was spent between Serbia and Mt Athos, but he also made two prolonged trips to the Holy Land. There were already political and religious tensions between Serbia and its neighbours, and Sava sought to strengthen the position of the Orthodox church, reforming the organization of the church and appointing “God-understanding and God-fearing men” as Bishops.

Although his bones and other relics were burnt by the Ottoman rulers in the 16<sup>th</sup> c a huge church has been erected on the site where they had been. Serbian churches almost all include an image of Sava, like the 13<sup>th</sup> c one below from the Mileševa Monastery. His *Hilander Typikon* is a parallel to the Rule of St Benedict; a document setting out the order for regulating monastic life and services.

