January 2nd: Memorial of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church

Gospel text (*Mt* 23:8-12): Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, “Do not be called ‘Master’; you have but one master, the Messiah. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

“Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church”

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, we celebrate the memory of two great saint associated with each other by charity - in close friendship - and by a great theological work. Their contribution earned them the title of "Doctor of the Church". St. Basil the Great (330-379 AD) was bishop of Caesarea and preeminent cleric of his time ("genius of the Church"); St. Gregory Nazianzen (329-390) was bishop of Constantinople and known as the "Theologian".

What hope kept them always united? Jesus Christ! In their Name they found their union: "Our great name consisted in the fact that we were Christians, and this is what they called us" (St. Gregory). Along with St. Athanasius and St. Gregory of Nyssa, they formed the group of "Cappadocian fathers", their work was fundamental the overcome the Arian crisis.

From the peace of the Church the theological production was intensified to deepen in the mysteries of the faith. But the terminology wasn’t fixed yet and it was not easy to delve into these mysteries. The excess of rationalization over the mystery of the Trinity led to the emergence of the Arian heresy around the figure of Christ, which - in its various derivations - tended to obscure and deny the divinity of Jesus Christ. Something parallel happened also with the Person of the Holy Spirit.

-These saints made the light of the Trinity shine, defending the faith proclaimed in the Council of Nicea (a 325): one God in three equal and different Persons -Father, Son and Holy Spirit-, "triple light that joins in a unique splendor" (St. Basil).