

January 11

St. Theodosius the Cenobiarch

423–529 • Cappadocia (modern-day Turkey)

Theodosius's parents greatly loved God and taught Theodosius to love God, too. Theodosius loved God so much that he wanted to give up the world—all that would distract him from God—so he could give God everything. So he left his home and went on a journey to the Holy Land, the place where Jesus had lived. There he visited a holy man who had also given up the world—St. Simeon Stylites, who lived on a platform on the top of a single pillar. St. Simeon blessed Theodosius and blessed his mission to give his life to God.

In the nearby mountains was the cave where the Magi, or the Three Kings, had stayed after they had seen the Infant Jesus in Bethlehem. This was where the angel had visited the magi to warn them that Herod wished to kill Jesus. Theodosius knew that this cave was a holy place, so he settled there to live a life of prayer and sacrifice. He never stopped praying; he stood praying all day, and he stood praying all night. He even tied a rope around his waist and attached it to a tree or a rock to hold him up in case he fell asleep. As a sacrifice to God, he ate only enough to keep from starving, surviving on dates and the wild vegetables that grew in the area. He lived this way for thirty years.

Many men flocked to Theodosius, attracted to his life of prayer and holiness. They wanted to give their lives to God like him. So many men came that Theodosius had to leave his cave and found a monastery near Bethlehem. There, Theodosius and the monks took care of the sick, the elderly, and the mentally disabled, and Theodosius performed many miracles for those who came for help.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem (the leader of the Church of Jerusalem) made Theodosius the leader of the monastic communities in the Holy Land. That is why Theodosius is known as the Cenobiarch, because the word cenobiarch in Greek means "leader of a community of monks." He died a holy death at about one hundred five years of age. St. Theodosius the Cenobiarch, help me to give my life to God!



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