

Timeline: Major Monastic Founders

- 243 St. Paul of Thebes escapes to live in desert alone.
- 271 St. Antony withdraws to the Egyptian desert, meets St. Paul.
- 312 Persecution of Christians Ends (St. Constantine / Edict of Milan).
- 320 St. Pachomius founds cenobitic (communal) monasticism in Egypt.
- 325 1st Ecumenical Council (Nicaea) begins assembling Biblical canon.
- 356 St. Athanasius writes 'The Life of Antony'.
- 370 St. Basil the Great, monastic founder in Cappadocia, writes his monastic rule.
- 370s St. Martin of Tours in Gaul (France) begins establishing monastic communities.
- 374 St. Melania the Elder establishes a monastery of women in Jerusalem.
- 380 Blessed Rufinus establishes a monastery of men in Jerusalem.
- 385 St. Jerome leaves Rome to follow monastic life in the East.
- 386 St. Augustine reads Latin translation of The Life of Antony.
- 395 St. Paulinus (a bishop) retires to Nola (Italy) to lead an ascetic life
- 404 St. Jerome translates the monastic rules of St. Pachomius into Latin.
- 410 St. John Cassian writes 'The Conferences' in Latin, allowing Westerners to read about Eastern monastic traditions.
- 502–505 St. Benedict of Nursia (central Italy) lives as a hermit in a cave.
- 507–529 St. Benedict builds 13 monasteries.
- 530 St. Benedict writes his monastic rule.
- 563 St. Columba leaves Ireland for Iona, Scotland.
- 590 St. Gregory the Great ('The Dialogist', 'Pope of Rome') becomes patriarch of Rome.
- 590 St. Columbanus leaves Ireland for Gaul (France); writes monastic rule at Luxeuil.
- 593 St. Gregory the Great writes the 'Dialogues' (including St. Benedict's life).
- 597 St. Gregory the Great sends St. Augustine of Canterbury as missionary to England.