

January 13 **Hilary**, Bishop of Poitiers 367

Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, was a prolific writer on Scripture and doctrine, an orator, and a poet to whom some of the earliest Latin hymns have been attributed. Augustine called him “the illustrious doctor of the Churches.” Jerome considered him “the trumpet of the Latins against the Arians.” Hilary was born in Poitiers, in Gaul, about 315, into a pagan family of wealth and power. In his writings, he describes the stages of the spiritual journey that led him to the Christian faith. He was baptized when he was about thirty. In 350, Hilary was made Bishop of Poitiers. Although he demurred, he was finally persuaded by the people’s acclamations. He proved to be a bishop of skill and courage. His orthodoxy was shown when, in 355, the Emperor Constantius ordered all bishops to sign a condemnation of Athanasius, under pain of exile. Hilary wrote to Constantius, pleading for peace and unity. His plea accomplished nothing, and, when he dissociated himself from three Arian bishops in the West, Constantius ordered Julian (later surnamed the Apostate) to exile him to Phrygia. There he remained for three years, without complaining, writing scriptural commentaries and his principal work, *On the Trinity*. Hilary was then invited by a party of “semi-Arians,” who hoped for his support, to a Council at Seleucia in Asia, largely attended by Arians; but with remarkable courage, in the midst of a hostile gathering, Hilary defended the Council of Nicaea and the Trinity, giving no aid to the “semi-Arians.” He wrote again to Constantius, offering to debate Saturninus, the Western bishop largely responsible for his exile. The Arians feared the results of such an encounter and persuaded Constantius to return Hilary to Poitiers.

**Collect** O Lord our God, you raised up your servant Hilary to be a champion of the catholic faith: Keep us steadfast in that true faith which we professed at our baptism, that we may rejoice in having you for our Father, and may abide in your Son, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; who live and reign for ever and ever.  
*Amen.*

#### **Lessons**

Zechariah 6:9–15

The word of the Lord came to me: Collect silver and gold from the exiles—from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah—who have arrived from Babylon; and go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak; say to him: Thus says the Lord of hosts: Here is a man whose name is Branch: for he shall branch out in his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. It is he that shall build the temple of the Lord; he shall bear royal honor, and shall sit upon his throne and rule. There shall be a priest by his throne, with peaceful understanding between the two of them. And the crown shall be in the care of Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Josiah son of Zephaniah, as a memorial in the

temple of the Lord.

Those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the Lord; and you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.

**Psalm 37:3–6,32–33**

3 Put your trust in the Lord and do good; \*  
dwell in the land and feed on its riches.

4 Take delight in the Lord, \*  
and he shall give you your heart's desire.

5 Commit your way to the Lord and put your trust in him, \*  
and he will bring it to pass.

6 He will make your righteousness as clear as the light \*  
and your just dealing as the noonday.

32 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, \*  
and their tongue speaks what is right.

33 The law of their God is in their heart, \*  
and their footsteps shall not falter.

**Luke 12:8–12**

“And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say.”