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St Ephrem the Syrian (January 28)

Ξένες γλώσσες / In English



Our Righteous Father Ephrem the Syrian was a prolific Syriac language hymn writer and theologian of the 4th century. He is venerated by Christians throughout the world, but especially among Syriac Christians, as a saint. His feast day in the Orthodox Church is January 28.

Ephrem was born around the year 306, in the city of Nisibis (the modern Turkish town of Nusaybin, on the border with Syria). Internal evidence from Ephrem's hymnody suggests that both his parents were part of the growing Christian community in the city, although later hagiographers wrote that his father was a pagan priest. Numerous languages were spoken in the Nisibis of Ephrem's day, mostly dialects of Aramaic. The Christian community used the Syriac dialect. Various pagan religions, Judaism and early Christian sects vied with one another for the hearts and minds of the populace. It was a time of great religious and political tension. The Roman Emperor Diocletian had signed a treaty with his Persian counterpart, Nerses in 298 that transferred Nisibis into Roman hands. The savage persecution and martyrdom of Christians under Diocletian were an important part of Nisibene church heritage as Ephrem grew up. (περισσότερα...)