

Saint Hilarion • Saint stories

Ever hear about kids being sent away to school? That kind of school is called a boarding school. Kids live there *and* go to school. When St. Hilarion was a child his parents sent him away to a boarding school because they wanted him to learn to read and write. This was the fourth century, and most people didn't know how.

While away at school, he learned about the Catholic faith and was baptized at the age of 15. St. Hilarion learned about a man everyone called St. Anthony who lived in the desert. Curious, he went and visited him—staying two months. That's a long visit! St. Hilarion decided he wanted to spend his life in prayer without distractions. One would think the desert would be the perfect place. Wrong! So many people came to visit St. Anthony to be cured or freed from devils that St. Hilarion left to find a quieter place—the desert near Egypt.

For clothes, he wore a sackcloth shirt, a shirt made from an old sack. (Cut a hole at the bottom of the bag for the head, and two holes on the side for arm holes. Stylish huh?) He also wore a leather tunic and a simple short cloak. He never took off his clothes unless they were worn out—not even to wash! (That probably helped keep people away. Do you think your mom would let you wear the same clothes every day for a week? Probably not!) For many years St. Hilarion ate only 15 figs a day—and never before sunset. During the day he made baskets that he sold to pay for the things he absolutely needed, which wasn't much.

Because of his saintly lifestyle, people began to come to him for advice. The number of people visiting him was more than he could bear. He decided to run off to a place where no one would know him, and he could have quiet. But the people said,

“No! We won’t let you.”

“Well,” St. Hilarion replied, “Fine. Then I just won’t eat until you let me leave.” After seven days of watching him not eat, the people feared he might die of starvation. They let him leave.

St. Hilarion moved many times to try to get away from people. Wherever he lived, people recognized his saintly lifestyle and flocked to him. All poor St. Hilarion wanted to do was spend his days praying. God, however, decided to work miracles through him which caused more people to come see him. In a desperate attempt for peace and quiet, he tried moving to a place where he couldn’t speak the language. “Ha! Now they won’t be able to talk to me,” thought St. Hilarion. But once again his saintly lifestyle and miracles attracted people. Toward the very end of his life, St. Hilarion found a place of peace, quiet and solitude, and spent his remaining years in prayer. At the age of 80, God welcomed him into his kingdom (heaven).

Feast day: Oct. 21

St. Hilarion, pray for us!

[Get a St. Hilarion coloring sheet](#)

Activity: Find the Priest!

Choose one person to be the priest. This person goes and hides somewhere in the house or outside—set boundaries for hiding before beginning the game. Give the priest three minutes to hide. Now the hunt is on! Find the priest! Whomever finds the priest first becomes the next priest.