



# The Conferences of John Cassian

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## **The Conferences of John Cassian** John Cassian

During his visits to the Egyptian deserts John Cassian met with many of the most important spiritual fathers. The Conferences are the remembrances of these conversations and cover a wide range of spiritual topics. The fathers were from different backgrounds, and while some were able to communicate in Greek and had been born into wealthy families, others were required to use interpreters and had come from more humble origins. The topics covered in these conversations ranged from christian perfection, in the first conference of Abbot Moses, to that on penitence in the conversation with Abbot Pinufius.

The Conferences have been very popular ever since they were written, and were distributed widely in the West and the East. Benedict, the founder of organised monasticism in the West even ordained that the Conferences should be read after supper to the assembled brethren. They were so popular that almost every monastery library contained at least some portion of them.

John Cassian was suspected in the West of teaching in some measure the Semi-Pelagian heresy, but in fact his teachings were completely in accord with the Orthodox spiritual traditions of the East. If he has been sometimes doubtfully regarded in the West, he is most definitely venerated as a Saint in the East.

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