



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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NATIVITY FAST

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Archbishop Vsevolod, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father John Monronko, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Ollie Pendylshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Terry Reinhart, Bernie O'Masta, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mary Pekich, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Sandy Gamble, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Khoruia Joanne Abdalah, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 6-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 2-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Bill, Erin, Jimmy Fennel [7th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Claudia [Horvath] Gradicheck, Alverta, Margaret Mueller, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Mike Pelchar [Liz's brother], Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Donna Kerr [stroke], Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Marjorie Robison, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, and Daria Masur. **ARNOLD:** Stefania Lucci, Kay Tomson, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

THANK YOU ALL—To my parish family, friends, Pani Gina, Alex, and Matthew for the beautiful cake and the wonderful celebration last Sunday in anticipation of the 10-year-anniversary of my ordination to the Holy Priesthood. It seems like only yesterday, but it has been a wonderful time serving in Christ's Holy Orthodox Church. God Bless and keep you all! Fr. Bob

Please remember ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex’s Fifth Grade and Matt’s Third Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! *Alex and Matt*

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, December 16	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
29TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPHET ZEPHANIAH, VENERABLE THEODULUS-EPARCHOF CONSTANTINOPLE, VENERABLE JOHN THE SILENT OF SAINT SABBAS MONASTERY, HIEROMARTYR THEODORE-ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA, VENERABLE SABBAS-ABBOT OF ZVENIGOROD MONASTERY-DISCIPLE OF SAINT SERGIUS OF RADONEZH		
<i>Tone 4</i>		
Colossians 3:4-11		
Luke 18:18-27		
<i>Parastas in Blessed Memory of Nicholas & Catherine Behun—Behun Family</i>		
Sunday, December 23	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
30TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—MARTYRS MENAS, HERMOGENES, & EUGRAPHUS OF ALEXANDRIA, MARTYR GEMELLUS OF PAPHLAGONIA, VENERABLE THOMAS OF BITHYNIA, BLESSED JOHN-KING OF SERBIA & HIS PARENTS BLESSED STEPHEN & BLESSED ANGELINA BRANKOVICH, SAINT IOASAPH-BISHOP OF BILHOROD		
<i>Tone 5</i>		
Colossians 3:12-16		
Luke 17:12-19		
Sunday, December 30	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM

31ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—HOLY PROPHET DANIEL & THREE HOLY YOUTHS-ANANAIS, AZARIAS, & MISAEEL, VENERABLE DANIEL THE CONFESSOR [IN SCHEMA STEPHEN] OF SPAIN & EGYPT, SAINT DIONYSIUS-BISHOP OF AEGINA

Tone 6

Colossians: 4-11

Luke 14:16-24

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 16 DECEMBER 2007

29TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPHET ZEPHANIAH, VENERABLE THEODULUS-EPARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, VENERABLE JOHN THE SILENT OF SAINT SABBAS MONASTERY, HIEROMARTYR THEODORE-ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA, VENERABLE SABBAS-ABBOT OF ZVENIGOROD MONASTERY-DISCIPLE OF SAINT SERGIUS OF RADONEZH

TROPARION—TONE 4

When the women disciples of the Lord
Learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection;
They cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles:
Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,
Granting the world great mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 4

My Savior and Redeemer,
As God rose from the tomb
And delivered the earthborn from their chains.
He has shattered the gates of Hell,
And as Master, He has risen on the third day!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 4

READER: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

PEOPLE: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

READER: Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, Thou art very great!

PEOPLE: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

READER: O Lord, how manifold are thy works!

PEOPLE: In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 4

Go forth and prosper and reign, because of truth and meekness and righteousness.

You love righteousness and hate iniquity.

If you want to overcome the spirit of slander, blame not the person who falls but the prompting demon. No one wants to sin against God, even though all of us sin without being compelled to it.

I knew a man who sinned openly but repented in secret. I denounced him for being lecherous but he was chaste in the eyes of God, having propitiated Him by a genuine conversion.

Do not allow human respect to get in your way when you hear someone slandering his neighbor. Instead, say to him, "Brother, stop it! I do worse things every day, so how can I criticize him?" You accomplish two things when you say this. You heal yourself and you heal your neighbor with the one bandage.

St. John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, 10

icon and troparion at: <http://www.comeandseeicons.com/ynk06.htm>

Make me whole, O Lord, and I will become whole! O only wise and merciful Physician, I beseech Thy benevolence: heal the wounds of my soul and enlighten the eyes of my mind that I may understand my place in Thine eternal design! And inasmuch as my heart and mind have been disfigured, may Thy grace repair them, for it is as true salt.

What shall I say to Thee, O Knower of the heart who searchest the heart and the inner workings of men? Indeed, Thou knowest that, like a waterless land, my soul thirsts after Thee and my heart longs for Thee. And Thy grace has always sated those that love Thee. Thus, as Thou hast always heard me, so now do not scorn my prayer. For Thou seest that my mind, like a prisoner, seeks Thee, the Only true Savior.

Send Thy grace, that it may satisfy my hunger and quench my thirst. For insatiably do I desire Thee, O my Master! And who can have enough of Thee if he truly loves Thee and thirsts for Thy truth?

O Giver of light! Fulfill my supplications and grant me Thy gifts according to my prayer; impart to my heart just one drop of Thy grace, that the flame of Thy love may begin to burn in my heart; and, like a fire, may it consume evil thoughts like thorns and thistles!

Give me all this in abundance; grant it to me as God unto man, as the King to His subjects, and increase it as a kind Father.

attributed to St. Ephrem the Syrian

Amma Sarah said, "If I prayed to God that all men should approve of my conduct, I should find myself a penitent at the door of each one, but I shall rather pray that my heart may be pure towards all."

She also said, "I put my foot to ascend the ladder, and I place death before my eyes before going up it."

A Different Christmas Poem

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.

Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.
The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.

My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know,
Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.

My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.
Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts.
To the window that danced with a warm fire's light
Then he sighed and he said, "It's really all right,
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."

"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,
That separates you from the darkest of times.
No one had to ask or beg or implore me,
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.

My Gramps died at ' Pearl on a day in December,"
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always remembers."
My dad stood his watch in the jungles of ' Nam ',
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

I've not seen my own son in more than a while,
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.
Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,
The red, white, and blue... an American flag.

I can live through the cold and the being alone,
Away from my family, my house and my home.
I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.
I can carry the weight of killing another,
Or lay down my life with my sister and brother..

Who stand at the front against any and all,
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."
"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."

"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?
It seems all too little for all that you've done,
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.
To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,

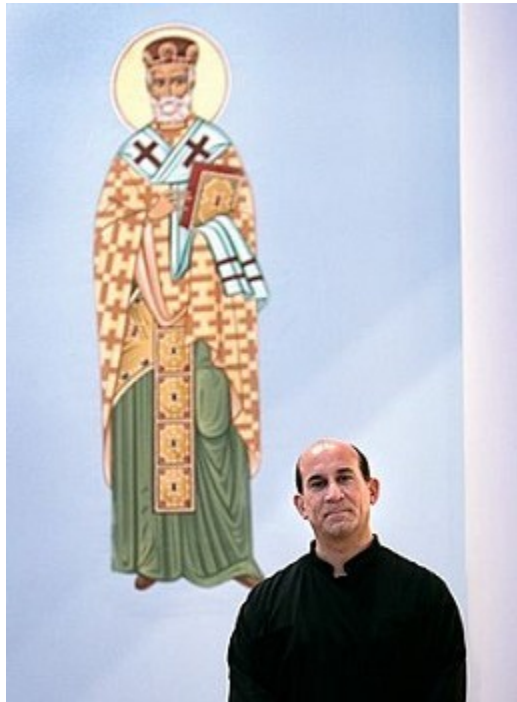
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.

For when we come home, either standing or dead,
To know you remember we fought and we bled.
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

PLEASE, would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our U.S. service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us.

LCDR Jeff Giles, SC, USN, 30th Naval Construction Regiment
OIC, Logistics Cell One, Al Taqqadum, Iraq

Orthodox Church celebrates the 'real' St. Nicholas



Fr. Nick Kasemeotes of Holy Anargyroi Greek Orthodox Church tells a bit of the history of St. Nicholas.

As Father Nicholas Kasemeotes gestured toward the iconography on the sanctuary wall of Holy Anargyroi Greek Orthodox Church, a slight smile crossed his face when he came to the image of a bearded old man in a robe. "This is St. Nicholas," he said.

Except for the white whiskers, there is little in the image that would make one associate this 4th century bishop with his contemporary incarnation as ol' St.

Nick -- or Santa Claus. Unlike the plump, jolly old elf, the saint's figure is lean, almost gaunt. Instead of a red suit and red stocking cap, he is clothed in liturgical vestments, complete with a miter on his head. And in his hands, he carries not a bag of toys, but the scriptures.

"He was a very powerful figure in the life of the church," Kasemeotes said.

Indeed, as tradition has it -- though some church historians dispute it -- Nicholas, the bishop of Myra in Lycia, was present at the first ecumenical council, the Council of Nicea, called by Emperor Constantine in 325. Nicholas remains one of the most popular of all saints, and both the Eastern and Western traditions of Christendom still honor him. His Feast Day is still celebrated on Dec. 6.

But for Father Kasemeotes, St. Nicholas holds a special place.

"When you are baptized, you are given the name of a saint," he said, noting that he shares the same first name as Nicholas. The sharing of the name of a saint is important in the Orthodox tradition, meaning that a person shares a special relationship with or affinity to that saint. So important is that saint to the person, that the saint's Feast Day becomes a person's Name Day -- an occasion that is celebrated more than one's own birthday. Father Kasemeotes will celebrate his Name Day on Thursday, the Feast of St. Nicholas.

"The celebration of the Name Day is more important," he said, "because it marks our baptism, the day of our rebirth. We say that the first birth ends in death, but the rebirth ends in life."

Because of his connection with St. Nicholas, Kasemeotes bemoans the way the bishop's story has devolved over the years into the popular image of Santa Claus. Yet, he understands how the legends surrounding the saint have changed in the ways they have.

One popular story surrounding Nicholas tells of how a poor man, living in Lycia, who had three daughters and who did not have the money to provide dowries for the daughters. At that time, Kasemeotes said, if a man could not provide dowries for his daughters, he might sell off those daughters into slavery, even into prostitution. In order to protect the girls, Nicholas, or so the legend goes, visited their home on three separate nights and threw bags of gold through the window. Some legends say he threw the gold down the chimney. Others say the gold landed in the stockings or the shoes of the girls.

From those stories and others like it, Kasemeotes said, came the image of St.

Nicholas as the protector of children and the bringer of gifts.

Although some Christian traditions celebrate St. Nicholas Day with the giving of gifts, Kasemeotes said that such gift-giving is not typical within the Greek Orthodox tradition. Instead, those within his congregation will celebrate as they do with other saints days -- by calling upon the saint to intercede for them and singing hymns to St. Nicholas.

The prayer for St. Nicholas Day is simple: "As rule of faith and picture of gentleness, and teacher of temperance, you were shown to your flock, by the truth of evidence; thus you achieved the lofty through humility, the abundant through poverty. O Father and Hierarch Nicholas, intercede with Christ our God, that our souls may be saved."

The Americanization of St. Nicholas

On Dec. 6, 1809, Washington Irving published the satirical fiction "The Knickerbocker's History of New York," with numerous references to a jolly St. Nicholas character. This was not a saintly bishop, rather an elfin Dutch burgher with a clay pipe.

The New York Historical Society held its first St. Nicholas anniversary dinner on Dec. 6, 1810. John Pintard commissioned artist Alexander Anderson to create the first American image of Nicholas for the occasion. Nicholas was shown in a gift-giving role with children's treats in stockings hanging at a fireplace.

The jolly elf image received a big boost in 1823, from a poem destined to become immensely popular, "A Visit from St. Nicholas," now better known as "The Night Before Christmas."

In 1863, political cartoonist Thomas Nast began a series of annual black-and-white drawings in Harper's Weekly, based on the descriptions found in the poem and Washington Irving's work. These drawings established a rotund Santa with a flowing beard, fur garments, and an omnipresent clay pipe. As Nast drew Santas until 1886, his work had considerable influence in forming the American Santa Claus. Along with appearance changes, the saint's name shifted to Santa Claus -- a natural phonetic alteration from the German Sankt Niklaus and Dutch Sinterklaas.

Source: St. Nicholas Center

Santa Claus and St. Nicholas

Everybody loves Santa Claus. He embodies holiday cheer, happiness, fun, and gifts—warm happy aspects of the Christmas season. How do Santa Claus and St. Nicholas differ?

Santa Claus belongs to childhood;
St. Nicholas models for all of life.

Santa Claus, as we know him, developed to boost Christmas sales—the commercial Christmas message;
St. Nicholas told the story of Christ and peace, goodwill toward all—the hope-filled Christmas message.

Santa Claus encourages consumption;
St. Nicholas encourages compassion.

Santa Claus appears each year to be seen and heard for a short time;
St. Nicholas is part of the communion of , surrounding us always with prayer and example.

Santa Claus flies through the air—from the North Pole;
St. Nicholas walked the earth—caring for those in need.

Santa Claus, for some, replaces the Babe of Bethlehem;
St. Nicholas, for all, points to the Babe of Bethlehem.

Santa Claus isn't bad;
St. Nicholas is just better.

From St. Gregory Palamas (The Homilies Vol. 2; St. Tikhon's Seminary Press pg. 125):

"Whereas love for God is the source and starting point of every virtue, love for the world is the cause of all evil. For that reason these two loves are at enmity with each other and destroy each other. As the Lord's brother declares: 'Friendship of the world is enmity to God. Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God' (Jms. 4:4). And John, whom Christ loved, says, 'If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, is not of the Father' (cf. I Jn. 2:15-16). Let us take heed, brethren, lest by loving evil desires and being

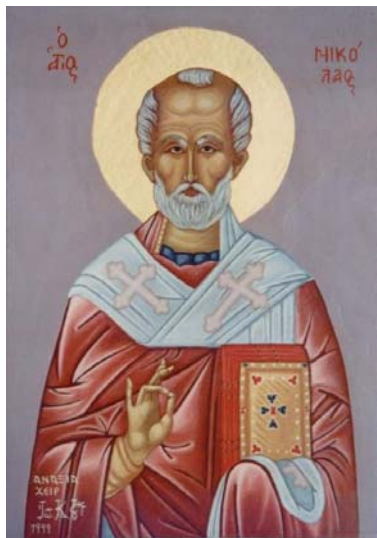
arrogant to one another, we fall away from our heavenly Father's love. For these two evils include every passion which separates us from God."

"The Lord does not permit demons to invade the fortress of our soul when we cry out to Christ fervently, with feeling, tirelessly, unceasingly and carefully. And this is a great profit, because the demons are accustomed to secretly teaching wickedness to the soul by means of bad thoughts. And, as St. Diadochos of Photiki says, when the demons enter the heart, they fortify themselves well, and from there they make their war, trying to camouflage themselves and trick us that they are attacking from the outside."

Archimandrite. Ioannikios Kotsonis.

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker and Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

December 6/19



Saint Nicholas, the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia is famed as a great saint pleasing unto God. He was born in the city of Patara in the region of Lycia (on the south coast of the Asia Minor peninsula), and was the only son of pious parents Theophanes and Nonna, who had vowed to dedicate him to God.

As the fruit of the prayer of his childless parents, the infant Nicholas from the very day of his birth revealed to people the light of his future glory as a wonderworker. His mother, Nonna, after giving birth was immediately healed from illness. The newborn infant, while still in the baptismal font, stood on his feet three hours, without support from anyone, thereby honoring the Most Holy Trinity. St. Nicholas from his infancy began a life of fasting, and on Wednesdays and Fridays he would not accept milk from his mother until after his parents had finished their evening prayers.

From his childhood Nicholas thrived on the study of Divine Scripture; by day he would not

leave church, and by night he prayed and read books, making himself a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Bishop Nicholas of Patara rejoiced at the spiritual success and deep piety of his nephew. He ordained him a reader, and then elevated Nicholas to the priesthood, making him his assistant and entrusting him to instruct the flock.

In serving the Lord the youth was fervent of spirit, and in his proficiency with questions of faith he was like an Elder, who aroused the wonder and deep respect of believers. Constantly at work and vivacious, in unceasing prayer, the priest Nicholas displayed great kind-heartedness towards the flock, and towards the afflicted who came to him for help, and he distributed all his inheritance to the poor.

There was a certain formerly rich inhabitant of Patara, whom St. Nicholas saved from great sin. The man had three grown daughters, and in desperation he planned to sell their bodies so they would have money for food. The saint, learning of the man's poverty and of his wicked intention, secretly visited him one night and threw a sack of gold through the window. With the money the man arranged an honorable marriage for his daughter. St. Nicholas also provided gold for the other daughters, thereby saving the family from falling into spiritual destruction. In bestowing charity, St. Nicholas always strove to do this secretly and to conceal his good deeds.

The Bishop of Patara decided to go on pilgrimage to the holy places at Jerusalem, and entrusted the guidance of his flock to St. Nicholas, who fulfilled this obedience carefully and with love. When the bishop returned, Nicholas asked his blessing for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Along the way the saint predicted a storm would arise and threaten the ship. St. Nicholas saw the devil get on the ship, intending to sink it and kill all the passengers. At the entreaty of the despairing pilgrims, he calmed the waves of the sea by his prayers. Through his prayer a certain sailor of the ship, who had fallen from the mast and was mortally injured was also restored to health.

When he reached the ancient city of Jerusalem and came to Golgotha, St. Nicholas gave thanks to the Savior. He went to all the holy places, worshiping at each one. One night on Mount Sion, the closed doors of the church opened by themselves for the great pilgrim. Going round the holy places connected with the earthly service of the Son of God, St. Nicholas decided to withdraw into the desert, but he was stopped by a divine voice urging him to return to his native country. He returned to Lycia, and yearning for a life of quietude, the saint entered into the brotherhood of a monastery named Holy Sion, which had been founded by his uncle. But the Lord again indicated another path for him, "Nicholas, this is not the vineyard where you shall bear fruit for Me. Return to the world, and glorify My Name there." So he left Patara and went to Myra in Lycia.

Upon the death of Archbishop John, Nicholas was chosen as Bishop of Myra after one of the bishops of the Council said that a new archbishop should be revealed by God, not chosen by men. One of the elder bishops had a vision of a radiant Man, Who told him that the one who came to the church that night and was first to enter should be made archbishop. He would be named Nicholas. The bishop went to the church at night to await Nicholas. The saint, always

the first to arrive at church, was stopped by the bishop. "What is your name, child?" he asked. God's chosen one replied, "My name is Nicholas, Master, and I am your servant."

After his consecration as archbishop, St. Nicholas remained a great ascetic, appearing to his flock as an image of gentleness, kindness and love for people. This was particularly precious for the Lycian Church during the persecution of Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Bishop Nicholas, locked up in prison together with other Christians for refusing to worship idols, sustained them and exhorted them to endure the fetters, punishment and torture. The Lord preserved him unharmed. Upon the accession of St. Constantine (May 21) as emperor, St. Nicholas was restored to his flock, which joyfully received their guide and intercessor.

Despite his great gentleness of spirit and purity of heart, St. Nicholas was a zealous and ardent warrior of the Church of Christ. Fighting evil spirits, the saint made the rounds of the pagan temples and shrines in the city of Myra and its surroundings, shattering the idols and turning the temples to dust.

In the year 325 St. Nicholas was a participant in the First Ecumenical Council. This Council proclaimed the Nicene Symbol of Faith, and he stood up against the heretic Arius with the likes of Sts. Sylvester the Bishop of Rome (January 2), Alexander of Alexandria (May 29), Spyridon of Trimythontos (December 12) and other Fathers of the Council.

St. Nicholas, fired with zeal for the Lord, assailed the heretic Arius with his words, and also struck him upon the face. For this reason, he was deprived of the emblems of his episcopal rank and placed under guard. But several of the holy Fathers had the same vision, seeing the Lord Himself and the Mother of God returning to him the Gospel and omophorion. The Fathers of the Council agreed that the audacity of the saint was pleasing to God, and restored the saint to the office of bishop.

Having returned to his own diocese, the saint brought it peace and blessings, sowing the word of Truth, uprooting heresy, nourishing his flock with sound doctrine, and also providing food for their bodies.

Even during his life the saint worked many miracles. One of the greatest was the deliverance from death of three men unjustly condemned by the Governor, who had been bribed. The saint boldly went up to the executioner and took his sword, already suspended over the heads of the condemned. The Governor, denounced by St. Nicholas for his wrong doing, repented and begged for forgiveness.

Witnessing this remarkable event were three military officers, who were sent to Phrygia by the emperor Constantine to put down a rebellion. They did not suspect that soon they would also be compelled to seek the intercession of St. Nicholas. Evil men slandered them before the emperor, and the officers were sentenced to death. Appearing to St. Constantine in a dream, St. Nicholas called on him to overturn the unjust sentence of the military officers.

He worked many other miracles, and struggled many long years at his labor. Through the prayers of the saint, the city of Myra was rescued from a terrible famine. He appeared to a

certain Italian merchant and left him three gold pieces as a pledge of payment. He requested him to sail to Myra and deliver grain there. More than once, the saint saved those drowning in the sea, and provided release from captivity and imprisonment.

Having reached old age, St. Nicholas peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. His venerable relics were preserved incorrupt in the local cathedral church and flowed with curative myrrh, from which many received healing. In the year 1087, his relics were transferred to the Italian city of Bari, where they rest even now (See May 9).

The name of the great saint of God, the hierarch and wonderworker Nicholas, a speedy helper and suppliant for all hastening to him, is famed in every corner of the earth, in many lands and among many peoples. In Russia there are a multitude of cathedrals, monasteries and churches consecrated in his name. There is, perhaps, not a single city without a church dedicated to him.

The first Russian Christian prince Askold (+ 882) was baptized in 866 by Patriarch Photius (February 6) with the name Nicholas. Over the grave of Askold, St. Olga (July 11) built the first temple of St. Nicholas in the Russian Church at Kiev. Primary cathedrals were dedicated to St. Nicholas at Izborsk, Ostrov, Mozhaik, and Zarsk. At Novgorod the Great, one of the main churches of the city, the Nikolo-Dvorischensk church, later became a cathedral.

Famed and venerable churches and monasteries dedicated to St. Nicholas are found at Kiev, Smolensk, Pskov, Toropetsa, Galich, Archangelsk, Great Ustiug, Tobolsk. Moscow had dozens of churches named for the saint, and also three monasteries in the Moscow diocese: the Nikolo-Greek (Staryi) in the Chinese-quarter, the Nikolo-Perervinsk and the Nikolo-Ugreshsk. One of the chief towers of the Kremlin was named the Nikol'sk.

Many of the churches devoted to the saint were those established at market squares by Russian merchants, sea-farers and those who traveled by land, venerating the wonderworker Nicholas as a protector of all those journeying on dry land and sea. They sometimes received the name among the people of "Nicholas soaked."

Many village churches in Russia were dedicated to the wonderworker Nicholas, venerated by peasants as a merciful intercessor before the Lord for all the people in their work. And in the Russian land St. Nicholas did not cease his intercession. Ancient Kiev preserves the memory about the miraculous rescue of a drowning infant by the saint. The great wonderworker, hearing the grief-filled prayers of the parents for the loss of their only child, took the infant from the waters, revived him and placed him in the choir-loft of the church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) before his wonderworking icon. In the morning the infant was found safe by his thrilled parents, praising St. Nicholas the Wonderworker.

Many wonderworking icons of St. Nicholas appeared in Russia and came also from other lands. There is the ancient Byzantine embroidered image of the saint, brought to Moscow from Novgorod, and the large icon painted in the thirteenth century by a Novgorod master. Two depictions of the wonderworker are especially numerous in the Russian Church: St. Nicholas of Zarsk, portrayed in full-length, with his right hand raised in blessing and with a

Gospel (this image was brought to Ryazan in 1225 by the Byzantine Princess Eupraxia, the future wife of Prince Theodore. She perished in 1237 with her husband and infant son during the incursion of Batu); and St. Nicholas of Mozhaisk, also in full stature, with a sword in his right hand and a city in his left. This recalls the miraculous rescue of the city of Mozhaisk from an invasion of enemies, through the prayers of the saint. It is impossible to list all the grace-filled icons of St. Nicholas, or to enumerate all his miracles.

St. Nicholas is the patron of travelers, and we pray to him for deliverance from floods, poverty, or any misfortunes. He has promised to help those who remember his parents, Theophanes and Nonna.

St. Nicholas is also commemorated on May 9/22 (The transfer of his relics) and on July 29/August 11 (his nativity).