



WHO WAS ST. NICHOLAS?

Myths and legends abound about St. Nicholas, who is arguably the most popular saint in the Christian Church. His generosity has been well documented. He is the patron saint of children, sailors and pawnbrokers. But just exactly what kind of a person was this man who is revered by all?

If we study the Troparion for the Feast of St. Nicholas, we find the best answer to that question. In it, he is called a **MODEL OF FAITH**. From his youth, he possessed a deep piety. Upon the passing of the previous Bishop of Myra, it was foretold that the first person to enter the church by the name "Nicholas" was to be appointed to be the new bishop. Unknowingly, one morning, he did just that! Although Nicholas felt he was too young and inexperienced for such a responsibility, he accepted that it was the will of God.

St. Nicholas is also referred to in his Troparion as an **EXAMPLE OF VIRTUE**. Truly he was a humble man who chose to give away all of his worldly possessions and live in poverty. He found true "wealth" in his charitable deeds, giving alms in secret – deliberately shunning the public accolades of those whom he aided.

Finally, we praise St. Nicholas in his Troparion for the **SINCERITY OF HIS DEEDS**. Perhaps nothing underscores this greater than the story of his participation in the First Ecumenical Council. Nicholas had deep convictions about the teachings of the Church. When the priest Arius challenged the accepted position on the divinity of Christ, the enraged Archbishop struck this heretic for his blasphemy!

Yes, St. Nicholas lived a life worthy of all the adulation that is given to him. May his example inspire us all to live faithful, virtuous and sincere lives.

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602
Phone.....570-645-2772
OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic

Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky

Reader Hours: Kaitlyn Dmytrow

Sunday, December 10, 2023

Choir Director: Wash King

Reader Epistle: Michael Ropitsky

27th Sunday after Pentecost (12th of Luke) Tone 2
Martyrs Means, Hermogenes, and Eugegraphus, of Alexandria

Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal, You slew hell with the splendor of Your Godhead. And when from the depths You raised the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: // "O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!"

Tone 2

Kontakion (Resurrection)

Let us sing praise in honor of the glorious Menas, and of his companions, the holy Hermogenes and Eugegraphus. For they have honored the Lord and fought for His glory. They are worthy of numbering with the Angels in heaven, // and are bountiful in their miracles.

We welcome all our visitors today! We want to let you know that we are so glad you came to pray with us. Please come again; join us after the Divine Liturgy in the parish hall for fellowship. If you do not have a home church, we invite you to become a part of our parish family. Only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves may approach the Chalice and receive Holy Communion.

SERVICES:

Sunday, Dec. 10	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Church School & Fellowship
Saturday, Dec. 16	4:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sunday, Dec. 17	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Church School & Fellowship
Saturday, Dec. 23	4:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sunday, Dec. 24	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Strict Fast , No Coffee Hour...
Sunday, Dec. 24	4:00 PM – Holy Supper in the Parish Hall (Eve of the Nativity)
Sunday, Dec. 24	6:00 PM – Great Compline and Matins (Eve of the Nativity)
Monday, Dec. 25	9:30 PM – Divine Liturgy, The Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ

Prayer List*:

Fr. Michael Evans, Fr. James Weremedic, Sbdn. James Weremedic
Stephanie Chmel, Ilene Devine, Julia Forte, Michael & Julia Harahus, Karen & Rose Harkins, Nancy King, Olga Kushnir, Anna Marie Mantey, Dorothy & Joseph Macenka, Anna Pierson, Melissa Schmitt, Helen Sheers, Olga Sidoriak, Martha Stafiniak, Michael Teno, Elizabeth Warcholak, Victoria Weremedic, Marie Yurchak

* Names will cycle off approximately every 30 days. You may request to have your name or the name of a loved one placed back on the list at any time by contacting Fr. James directly.

On December 24, 2023, we will have **our first parish 'Holy Supper'** in our church hall with traditional strict fasting foods. Celebrating as a family of St. Mary's is important to prepare for the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ! **Please sign up on the signup sheet at the candle desk.**

If anyone is in need of a priest, please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772. Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

Candles (December 10)

7-day Vigils-Altar... In memory of **Mary Lutash** offered by Raymond & MaryJo Danchak

Altar Candles... In heath **Stephanie Chmel** offered by Julia Forte

Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel** offered by family members

7-day Vigils-Tetrapod... In memory of **Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & MaryJo Danchak

Decorated Candles... In memory of **Lillian Yelsh** offered by William Yelsh

Vigil Crosses... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel** offered by family members

December Birthdays: 3- Izrael Bracero, 9- Odess Remington, 11- Stephanie Chmel,
16- James Weremedic, Jr., 18- Kathryn Jupin, 19- Ixsaviar Bracero, 28- Sophie James

Financials 12/03/2023: Operating Acct: Weekly Envelopes \$263, Non-envelope \$295,
Holy Day \$145, Altar Candles \$10, Candles \$56, Donation \$525, Building Fund \$21

If you have any Redner receipts, please call or get them to Helen King
Please use your Boyer's card when shopping at Boyers; if you need one call Helen King

Fellowship Hour Hosts:

December 10 Michael Tutusko

December 17 Lena & Ron Berezniak

December 24 **No Fellowship Hour**

St. Mary's Youth Group News:

Thank you to all who donated items and money towards the shut-in collection drive. We were able to fill gift bags for 14 shut-ins. Thank you for helping us spread Christmas cheer. We will begin delivering gifts today.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 TONE 2
27th Sunday after Pentecost (12th of Luke)
Martyrs Means, Hermogenes, and Eugephus, of Alexandria

Entrance Prayer

I will enter Thy house, I will worship toward Thy holy Temple in fear of Thee. Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness because of my enemies; make my way straight before Thee. For there is no truth in their mouth; their heart is destruction, their throat is an open sepulcher, they flatter with their tongue. Judge them, O God, let them fall by their own counsels; because of their many transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against Thee. But let all who take refuge in Thee rejoice, let them always sing for joy; and do Thou dwell in them, that those who love Thy name may exult in Thee. For Thou blesses the righteous, O Lord, Thou coverest us with good will as with as with a shield.

Ephesians 6:10-17 (Epistle)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Silent Prayer before the Gospel:

Illumine our hearts, O Master Who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Thy gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto Thee. For Thou art the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thy Father, Who is from everlasting, and Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Luke 17:12-19 (Gospel)

Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

The Essential Truth

"I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods besides Me" (Deuteronomy 5:6)

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37)

"I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things" (Nicene Creed)

We recite it so simply and quickly, as though it is so obvious that it needs no discussion; however, we live in a world that challenges that fundamental truth and imposes the implications of its significance throughout society. Our culture emphasizes the rights of the individual to such an extent that we have all but lost the contrasting truth of unity in oneness of conviction.

The Hebrew people led out of Egypt by Moses were taught by the great prophet the essentials of their faith. Above all else was the absolute belief in one God. They could and did dispute the laws of the Almighty, His rules and obligations, but never the truth that God is one and there is no other. He is a jealous God and will not share authority with another. When Jesus Christ calls His followers to love the Lord more than any human relation including parents, children or spouse, He is lifting up the implications of that exclusive love for God.

When the human being sets himself or herself in the first place before the Lord Almighty, which is generally called "humanism," what follows is a rearrangement of values. When I ask the meaning of life for me – why am I living, what is the root from which I draw my morals and actions, what is the basis for making any and all decisions, right and wrong are not absolute but rather determine what is good for me at any moment of time. God may be the Creator of all that exists, including me. He may have a plan that caused me to be brought into the world and live with some purpose in His mind. However, unless I can understand or figure out what that purpose is all about, it really doesn't motivate me to try to direct my life as though I can or should know. Let the Church say that I am alive only by the grace of the Holy Spirit, I thank the Spirit, even the Father and Christ Jesus, but it has no absolute significance regarding the decisions I make or the pathway that I follow.

The above may describe the vast majority of people with whom we share the present time and space. On the other hand, if I take the gospel of Christ seriously at face value and seek to learn the hidden message underlying the words and actions of my Lord [and I have no right to call Him that unless I accept the conditions of being first a servant, then a disciple, and ultimately the friend of Jesus], I should begin by accepting the basic truth: I believe in one God. Nothing that exists is outside of the orbit of His creation, including myself. Every thing – each atom and molecule – is part of His plan, and while I do not understand much of it, I believe in His grand plan. I accept it in faith. I shall do my utmost to diminish self-reliance and reach out to unity with my Lord, directly in prayer and indirectly through unity with all others. I do not need to even know my true name – God knows it, just as He can see where I am headed and how far or near I am to fulfilling His idea of whom I should be.

Fr. Vladimir Berzonsky
February 5, 2012