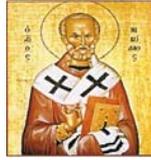


December 6

C. ☩ Our Father among the Saints Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, Wonderworker

He was born in about the year 280 during the reign of Emperor Valerian in the city of Patara in the province of Lycia of noble, wealthy and pious parents, Theophanes and Nonna. The grace of God revealed to them signs from his very childhood. Later as an adolescent he displayed an inclination for strict abstinence and the solitary life. He abandoned temporal amusements and distractions, frequently visited the temples of God and enjoyed studying the Holy Scriptures under the direction of his uncle Nicholas, Bishop of Patara. By the request of the latter, St. Nicholas was given over to the service of the Lord by his parents and on reaching maturity he was ordained a presbyter. In this capacity St. Nicholas led an even stricter ascetic life. He continually attended vigils, fasts and prayer, and more and more perfected himself in the virtuous life. During a journey of his uncle to the Holy Land, St. Nicholas directed the Patara flock, but after his uncle returned he was sent to Jerusalem and while on the way he twice calmed a storm through his prayers. After he returned home, he, through the special inspiration of God, was transferred to the city of Myra. And soon because of his holy life he was elected bishop there and was for all an example of indestructible faith and burning zeal for it, of deep piety and immeasurable humility, meekness and gentleness, of praiseworthy purity and chastity and great abstinence, of truly Christian philanthropy and of deep concern and compassion for the unfortunate. His clothes were simple, his food was Lenten. The door of his house was open for everyone, and all day he practiced his calling by deed, always attentively listening to all requests which came to him. During the reign of Diocletian he was imprisoned together with other Christians until the reign of Constantine the Great, "suffering hunger and thirst in an overcrowded prison".



In 325 he participated in the First Ecumenical Council and showed his special burning zeal for the defense of Orthodoxy and the disgust at the false teaching of Arius. As for his own deep truly Christian love, the hierarch of Myra, Lycia during his life was known as the father for orphans and the comforter of sufferers. Being glorified by the Lord with the gift of wonderworking, St. Nicholas "performed many great and glorious wonders on earth and at sea, helping those in trouble, and saving them from drowning, and carrying them from the depths of the sea to dry land, delighting in captivity and bringing them into his house, delivering them from bonds and prisons, interceding for them from visitation of the sword, and freeing them from death, giving healing many times to many: sight to the blind, walking to the lame, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb; enriching many of the latter suffering in infirmity and poverty, giving food to the hungry, and to everyone in need being a ready helper, showing himself a warm defender and quick intercessor. And now to everyone who calls on him he helps and delivers from trouble. The great wonderworker is known in both the East and the West, and

all the ends of the earth know his good deeds". St. Nicholas died in very old age in the year 342 in Myra, where he was buried. In church hymns St. Nicholas is glorified as "the candle holder of the enlightened", "the rule of Orthodoxy", "the pillar of the church", "the adversary of impiety and the accessory of piety", "a nourisher of widows and orphans ", "the comfort of the weeping", "the most merciful and mightiest petitioner", "the great and warm helper turning to those in trouble, who travel by land or by sea". Calling all to the glorification of the hierarch of Myra, Lycia, the Holy Church appeals: "Let all of us faithful praise the wisest hierarch, the God-bearing Nicholas, as the warmth of those in trouble and a helper and defender for those in sorrow before God: for he prays to the Lord for the faithful who work and sing his divine memory. "Let kings and princes gather together", "Let us all shout", "Pastors and teachers, the good shepherd", "Let us gather together to praise the physician of the infirm, and the deliverer from those in trouble, the help of sinners, the treasury of the poor, and the comforter of the sorrowful, the companion of travelers, the pilot of the seafaring, and for all everywhere the warm anticipator. Therefore let all who praise the great hierarch now say: All Holy Nicholas, anticipate and deliver us from every real trouble and save your flock through your prayers". Concerning the transferring of the relics of St. Nicholas to Bari, see May 9 _).

The Kontakion, tone 3

**You proved yourself a holy priest in Myra:
For you lived the Gospel of Christ, O Venerable One,
You offered your life for your people,
And you saved the innocent from death:
Therefore you were blessed as the great keeper of the mysteries by the grace of God.**

Paramoegas: 1) see the first reading for Jan. 9. 2) Proverbs 10:31-32, 11:1-12; 3) see the third reading for Jan.10. **Matins Gospel:** See the Gospel for the Liturgy on Jan. 9. **Epistle and Gospel:** see the Epistle and Matins Gospel for Jan. 9.

If the rector wishes, he may do the Vigil.

New Martyr Nicholas Karamanos (that is born in Karamania), was hanged by the Turks in Smyrna in 1657 for confessing his faith in Christ and unwillingness to accept Islam.

Repose of the Blessed Metropolitan Maximus

The blessed Maximus, born a Greek, was installed as the metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia in 1283. Because of the frequent Tatar attacks on Kiev he transferred the see to Vladimir. During the difficult time of the Mongolian yoke the

blessed Maxim underwent many labors and trouble. Being zealous for the salvation of his flock, he sent "to all Orthodox Christians" a rule concerning fasts and the protection of legal marriage. He died in 1305.

_) Russian people honor St. Nicholas with special fervor and all often turn to him with prayers. He is the defender from all trouble and sorrow and nearly every peasant has his image. Russian people declare their most naive desires and hopes before him. Commoners say: "for us there is no better advocate than Nikola". "Ask Nikola and he will say I shall save". And among us the name Nicholas is one of the most common. Such reverence of St. Nicholas could have influenced placing him weekly in the service for Thursday (in the Octoechos), and the brightness of the description in the Menaion (Chetji-Mineiakh) of the personal character and sincere quality of one pleasing to God. His protection of oppressed innocence, resolute protection for the unjustly condemned and persecuted, his speedy help in every possible trouble and his advocating all calling on him, his zealousness in faith and meekness - all this is especially close to the open, courageous, good and soft Russian nature. In particular St. Nicholas is esteemed by us as a protector on the waters (refer to May 9) and the Holy Church magnifies him in its chanting "the traveling companion and the real helmsman on the sea".

The depiction of St. Nicholas on some icons is with a miter and on others without the miter - some people explain that at first he was a presbyter, and then a bishop, and that is why on some icons he is represented as a presbyter, i.e. without a miter (Tserkovnyi Vestnik (The Church Messenger) 1892, 42).

In some dioceses a circular collection is made for the benefit of parochial and grammar schools on this day. In view of the development and consolidation of school business, priests should be concerned for the increase of this collection.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0445-7
Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © 17 December 2004. All rights reserved.*