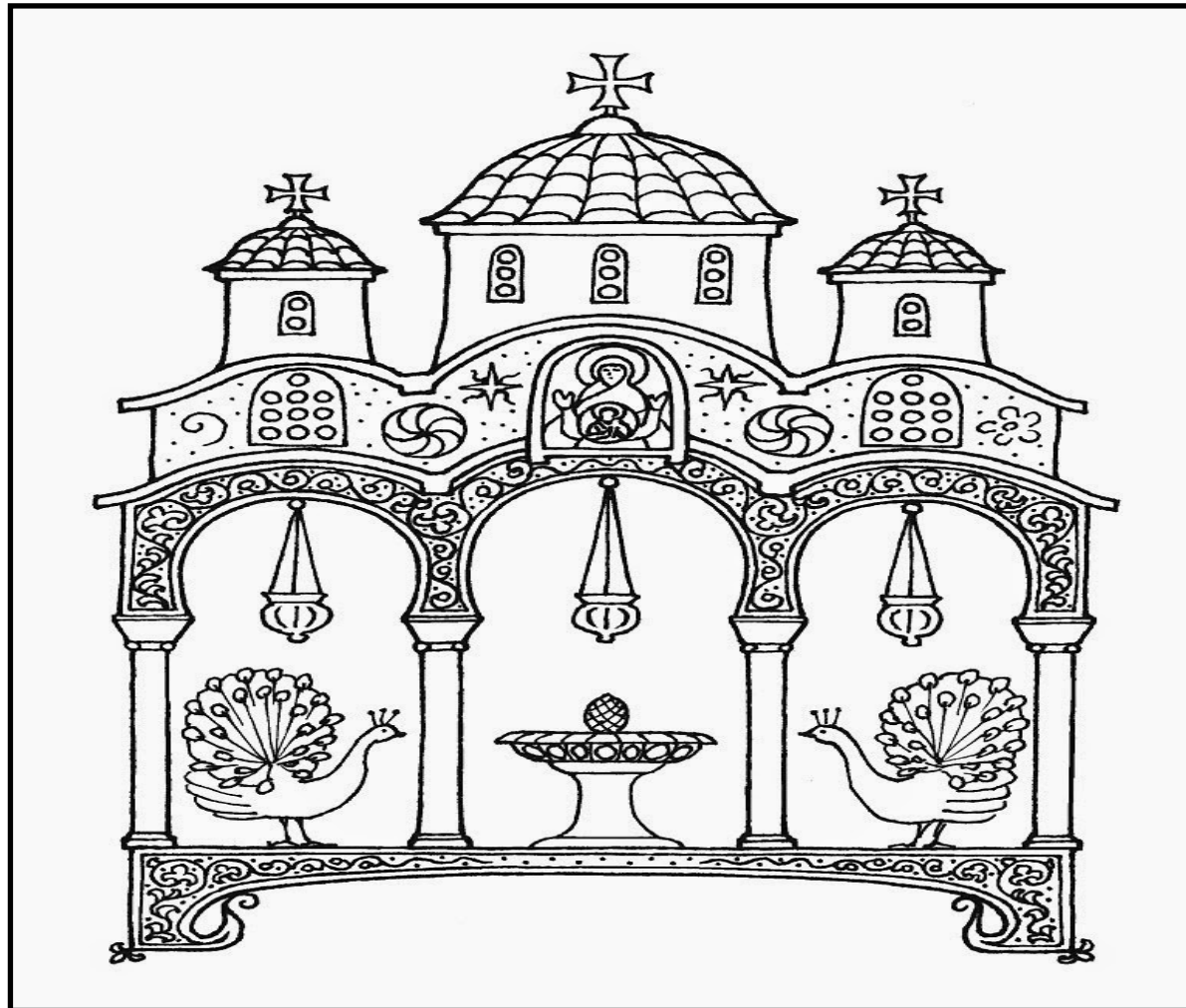


SAYINGS FROM THE FATHERS

“What is the aim of the incarnate dispensation of God’s Word, preached in all the Holy Scriptures but which we, who read them, do not know? The only aim is that, having entered into what is our own, we should participate in what is His. The Son of God has become Son of Man in order to make us, men, sons of God, raising our race by grace to what He is Himself by nature, granting us birth from above through the grace of the Holy Spirit and leading us straightway to the kingdom of heaven, or rather, granting us this kingdom of heaven within us (Luke 17:21), in order that we should not merely be fed by the hope of entering it, but entering into full possession thereof should cry: our ‘life is hid with Christ in God’ (Col. 3:3).”

+ St. Simeon the New Theologian, “Practical and Theological Precepts” from The Philokalia



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church

256 Hamilton St.

Worcester, MA 01604

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Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor

Email: Brymc56@comcast.net Cell: (978) 314-1962

Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM



OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

**Fourteenth Sunday of the Cross
Twenty-Fifth Sunday After Pentecost
The Blind Man of Jericho
December 1, 2019**

Antiphon (3rd)

1- Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Entrance Hymn:

Priest: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ

People: **O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!**

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 8, Pg. 42)

You descended from on high O compassionate One; and consented to burial for three days that You might free us from suffering. O Lord, our life and our resurrection, glory to You.

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1, Pg. 15)

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity, and in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Preparation (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth to the eternal Word of God, in an ineffable manner. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when you hear this news, and glorify with the angels and the shepherds, Him who shall appear as New Child, being God from all eternity.

St Nicholas the Wonderworker

The earliest written source on the life of St Nicholas that we have comes from the early to mid-ninth century, almost 500 years after his death. There was at least one earlier written life which no longer exists. Earlier testimony to this saint is found in icons, prayers and the existence of churches dedicated to him. St Nicholas is also mentioned in some earlier writings.

According to the ninth and tenth century lives we have, Nicholas was born to wealthy Christian parents in Patara, on the southwest coast of the Roman province of Lycia in Asia Minor. He was orphaned in an epidemic while he was still young and raised by his uncle, the bishop of Patara.

Of a religious disposition, Nicholas was tonsured as a reader by his uncle while quite young and eventually was ordained a priest. Obeying Christ's words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his own inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering.

As a prominent Christian, Nicholas was imprisoned during the persecutions of Diocletian and Galerius, but freed when the persecutions ended in 311. In response to his deliverance, Nicholas traveled to the Holy Land on pilgrimage. While there, he reportedly lived with a group of monks in what is today Beit Jala. However Nicholas was not called to the monastic life and returned to Patara.

On the return voyage, the ship was threatened by a powerful storm. The terrified sailors were amazed to see the storm suddenly subside at Nicholas' prayers. This gave rise to the custom of praying to St Nicholas as protector of seamen.

In 317 Nicholas was chosen as archbishop of Myra, the provincial capital of Lycia. He was neither a great ascetic nor a martyr. His reputation rests on his pastoral concern for the people under his care, particularly the poor and the defenseless.

The tenth-century life of St Nicholas by Simeon Metaphrastes ("the Translator") tells of secret gift-giving to save an impoverished man's daughters from penury. St Nicholas secretly left money to provide a dowry for each of the daughters in turn. These stories and more became known in the West, and Nicholas became a favorite saint and gift-giver throughout Europe.

In 325 Nicholas reportedly attended the First Ecumenical Council called by the emperor to combat the Arian schism prevailing in parts of the empire. Always a firm opponent of Arianism, Nicholas reputedly opposed Arius personally at the council. As John the Deacon described it, "Animated like the Prophet Elias with zeal for God, he put the heretic Arius to shame at the synod not only by word but also by deed, smiting him on the cheek." Nicholas, the account continues, was deposed as a result. His omophorion and Gospel book, signs of his office, were confiscated and he was imprisoned.

During the night the Lord Jesus and the Theotokos appeared to Nicholas in prison, restoring the items taken from him. Icons of St Nicholas often depict this vision of Christ and the Theotokos returning his omophorion and Gospel.

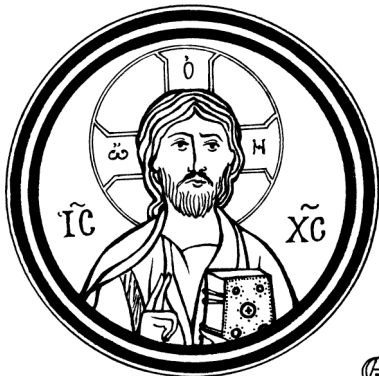
Nicholas became an increasingly influential public figure later in his episcopate. He died in Myra on December 6, 343 and was buried in his cathedral. After the Seljuk Turks conquered the area, Italian merchants in Venice and Bari sought to "rescue" the saint from the Turks. In 1087, seamen broke into Nicholas' tomb and spirited away the saint's body to Bari where it was enshrined in a great basilica built in his honor. Today pilgrims still visit Bari to pray at Nicholas' tomb

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today - +Archimandrite Joseph Francavilla
+ Robert & Isabella Esper. Requested by Linda Esper

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ Last Week's Attendance/Donations: **29/\$960**
- ◆ **Help Wanted** - As you all know, our weekly Bingo is a major source of income for the parish. We could use some additional workers! Please consider volunteering some of your time on Tuesday evenings. If you can volunteer, please see Joe Najemy.
- ◆ **Help Wanted II** - We really need help setting up the food for the coffee hour. If you can come to Liturgy early and help out, it would be much appreciated!
- ◆ The traditional Nativity Fast, also known as St. Phillip's Fast, began November 15. This fast is a bit more relaxed at the beginning and gets more strict during the final two weeks. In the Melkite usage, the Fast is from **December 10 through December 24**, the Paramony of the Nativity, which is a strict fast day. In the Byzantine Tradition, we fast before most major feasts in preparation for our festal celebration. Our liturgical life is a series of fasts and feasts. If you have not previously kept the Nativity Fast, consider doing so this year. If you have questions about how to begin, please see Fr. Bryan.
- ◆ **Anna Maria College** is looking to hire a part-time (20hrs.) Assistant to Campus Ministry and Coordinator of Community Outreach. If you or someone you know is interested, please go to: www.annamaria.edu/human-resources/jobs.



ICON AND BOOK SALE

The Icon and Book Store is open on Saturdays from 9AM till Noon. Fr. Bryan will be available to hear confessions as well. Come and spend a little time with us and purchase a book and/or an icon or two!

Welcome to those who are visiting today. We are happy to have you worship with us. If this is your first time here, please come downstairs to the Hall, introduce yourself, have some refreshments, and get to know the Community. If you have any questions about the Melkite Church and its traditions, please don't hesitate to ask Fr. Bryan.

Weddings — One year notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Baptisms — One month notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Please let Fr. Bryan know about anyone who is sick, in the hospital, or homebound so that he can visit and bring them the Eucharist on a regular basis.

Liturgical Schedule for the Holiday Season

Friday December 6 @ 7:00PM - Divine Liturgy for Feast of St. Nicholas

Sunday December 8 @ 10:00AM - Divine Liturgy for Maternity of St. Anne

Sunday December 15 @ 10:00AM - Divine Liturgy followed by St. Nicholas Celebration

Friday December 20 @ 7:00PM - Service of Holy Anointing

Christmas Liturgies:

Tuesday December 24 @ 5:00PM - Vesper-Liturgy of St. Basil

Wednesday December 25 @ 10:00AM - Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Sunday December 29 @ 10:00AM - Sunday after the Nativity

FLOWER DONATIONS IN MEMORY OF:

Salim Abraham & Arthur Abraham. Donated by Ronald Abraham

Annie Abraham & Robert Abraham. Donated by Eileen Abraham

Nicholas & Theodora Barouk & Matteo & Lucia Solitro. Donated by Mr. & Mrs. Antonio Solitro

Robert & Alice Najemy. Donated by Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Najemy

Thomas & Nikosey Families. Donated by Katherine Thomas

William Rizk. Donated by Mary Rizk

CELEBRATING TWO GIFT-GIVING SAINTS

IN MANY CULTURES it is traditional to greet the winter season with festivities. The harvest is gathered and people could now spend time celebrating. In Christian cultures the festival often took on a religious flavor. Thanksgiving Day is one example of such an occasion.

Over the centuries Eastern Christians have turned certain saint's days into occasions for winter festivities. In the Middle East children keep St Barbara's day (December 4) as an occasion for dressing up in costumes, parading, and collecting gifts. A popular carol tells the story of the saint and a special sweet (called Barbara) is served. Christians in the Slavic regions of Eastern Europe keep St Nicholas' day (December 6) in similar ways and Greeks celebrate St Basil's day (January 1) with the traditional *vasilopita* (St Basil's bread) in which a coin is baked to surprise the lucky finder.

The Great Martyr St Barbara

St Barbara is first mentioned in a seventh-century Roman Martyrology, some 350 years after her death. The sources of what has been passed down about her were collected by St Simeon Metaphrastes ("the Translator") in his tenth-century lives of the saints, the Menologion.

Middle Eastern sources record that Barbara was from Heliopolis (Baalbek in present-day Lebanon). Some sources describe her as a native of Heliopolis in Egypt or even of Nicomedia (in Turkey today). All the stories of this martyr say that she was the daughter of a rich pagan named Dioscoros who, after his wife's death, kept Barbara locked in a tower to keep her from the eyes of strangers.

After a certain time Dioscoros relented and allowed his daughter a measure of freedom. She became acquainted with the Gospel through some young Christian women who befriended her and through a priest fleeing persecution in Alexandria, who ultimately baptized her.

Dioscoros had commissioned the construction of a bath house on his estate. In his absence Barbara had altered the plans to include a third window, to represent the Trinity. When Dioscoros learned the reason for her actions he flew at her in a rage. She escaped and fled from him, using a number of disguises. She was eventually captured and severely beaten.

The last great persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire was in full swing. When Barbara would not renounce her faith, Dioscoros handed her over to the prefect of the city, Martian, who subjected her to public humiliation and torture. Juliana, a Christian woman in the crowd reproached Martian for his cruelty. In return he condemned Juliana to die with Barbara. Both were beheaded, Barbara (it is said) by her own father. A pious man named Galentian recovered the bodies of Barbara and Juliana, buried their remains and, when the persecutions ended, erected a shrine in their memory. In the sixth century, relics of St Barbara were brought to Constantinople. Six hundred years later a portion of them was brought to Kiev by Barbara, the daughter of the Byzantine emperor, when she married Michael, the Grand Prince of Kiev. Around the same time, the Coptic church of St Cyrus in Old Cairo was rebuilt as the Church of St Barbara to house relics of this saint. She is venerated in all the Churches of East and West. Because of the lack of contemporary witnesses to her struggle, the Roman Church removed her name from their universal calendar. She is still venerated in local Western Churches, particularly in Europe.

In the Middle East, her feast is observed by the preparation of sweets, including the "Barbara." This is the traditional boiled wheat dish made for memorials of a saint or of the deceased. In this case it is sweetened with pomegranate seeds, raisins, anise and sugar. It is frequently brought to homes by children singing a traditional carol about this saint. They are often costumed to recall the disguises which St Barbara used to elude her father.

Prokimenon

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about Him bring gifts to the awesome Lord.

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about Him bring gifts to the awesome Lord.

Verses: God is renowned in Judah; in Israel, great is His name.

People: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them; let all round about Him bring gifts to the awesome Lord.

Reader: Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them;

People: Let all round about Him bring gifts to the awesome Lord.

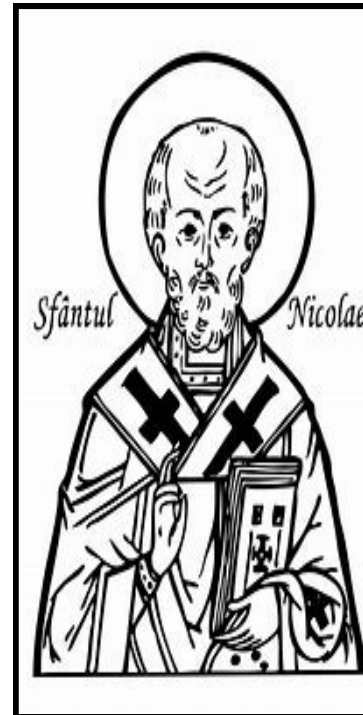
Epistle: Eph. 4:1-8

Alleluia Verses

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord; Let us sing joyfully to God our Savior!

Verses: Let us greet His presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to Him!

Gospel: Luke 18:35-42 , 14th Sunday of the Holy Cross – The Blind Man of Jericho



ST. NICHOLAS CELEBRATION

Please join us on **December 15** following the 10 AM Divine Liturgy as we celebrate our Father among the Saints, Nicholas the Wonderworker. St. Nicholas is beloved in both the East and the West. It is from the Dutch for St. Nicholas, *Sinterklaas*, that we get *Santa Claus*. His feast day, December 6, was traditionally the day for giving gifts in honor of St. Nicholas' great generosity and gift-giving.

During the coffee hour, we will have a short program, discussing the life of St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas will likely make an appearance, passing out the traditional gold candy coins and other goodies! The coffee hour is sponsored by the Aulo and Francis families. Please let us know how many children will attend and their ages by sending an email to olphmelkite@gmail.com or calling the rectory at (508) 752-4174. We hope to see you all there!