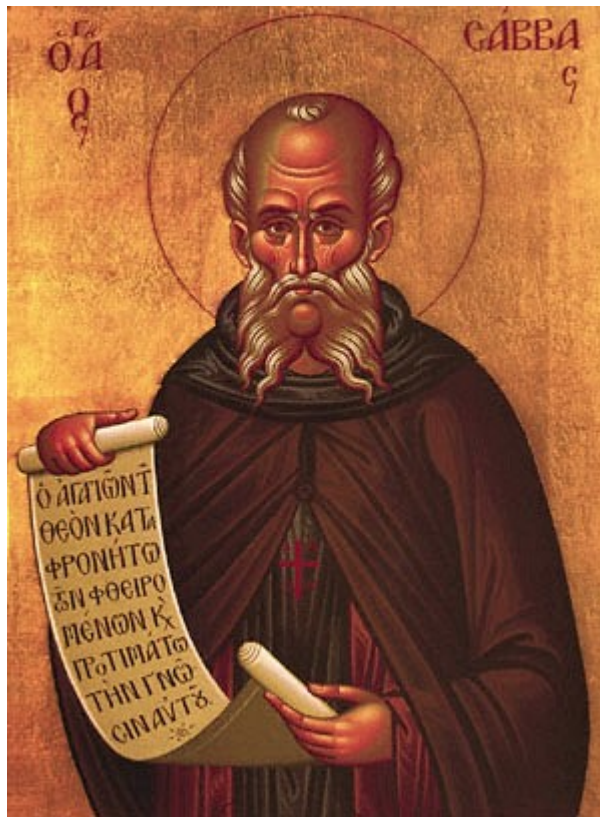


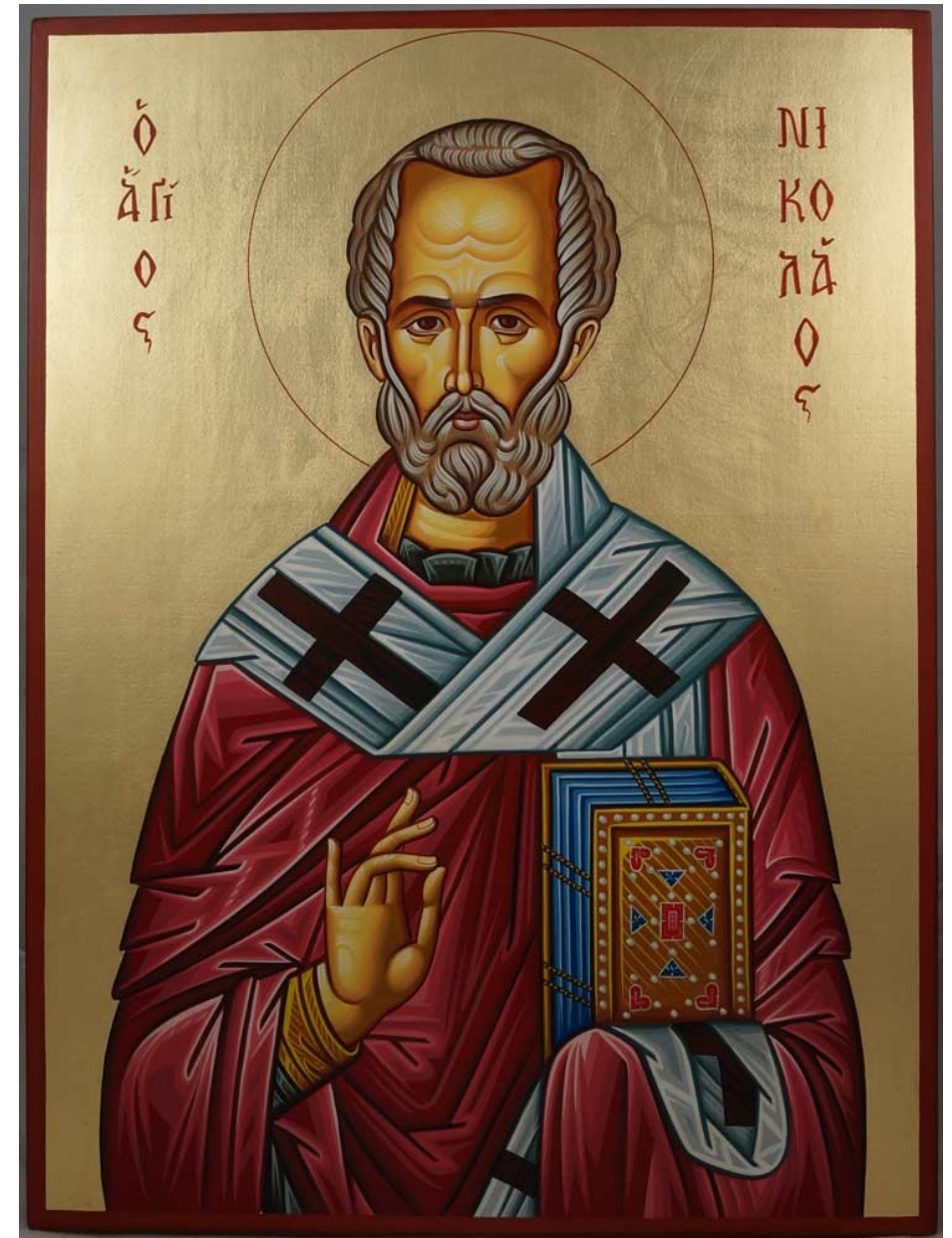
From the Divine Office for the Commemoration of our Holy and God-bearing Father Sabbas the Sanctified (Dec. 5)

Let us honor holy Sabbas, for he was an angel in the flesh on earth, and a man of God in Heaven, the adornment of the world and the treasury of virtues, the glory of ascetics and their pride! Planted in the house of God, he has flourished like the just, as a cedar planted in the desert. He has increased the flock of the spiritual sheep of Christ in justice and holiness. (Vespers)

Wisdom has found herself a son in you, for from your infancy you loved the incarnate Wisdom. It has chosen to dwell in your soul, O holy father Sabbas. It has drawn you away from this world, directing you to the heights, weaving a crown of immaterial flowers which it placed on your holy head. Crowned now in glory, make me worthy of the Lord, that He may grant me the wisdom and fitting words to sing of your holy passing, glorified by Christ our God. Thus in joy, we will be able to sing out to you: "Joy to you, O father, worthy of all praise!" (Orthros)



**TENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
DECEMBER 6, 2020**



**ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA
DECEMBER 6**

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St.
Worcester, MA 01604
Rectory: (508) 752-4174 Hall: (508) 755-2199
Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
Email: Brymc56@comcast.net Cell: (978) 314-1962
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

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.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena

Laka. Haleloueya.

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 2, pg. 38)

When You descended to death, O immortal Life, You put Hades to death by the splendor of Your divinity. And when You raised the dead from below the earth, all the heavenly powers cried out to You: “O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!”

Troparion of St. Nicholas (Tone 4)

O Father and Hierarch Nicholas, the holiness of your life has set you before your flock as a rule of faith, an example of meekness and a teacher of self-restraint; wherefore you acquired greatness through humility and spiritual wealth through poverty. Pray to Christ God that He may save our souls.

Troparion of the Dormition (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 intercessions, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Preparation of the Nativity of our Lord (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 a new Child being God from all eternity.

Nicholas and Arius

In 325 Nicholas reportedly attended the First Ecumenical Council called by the emperor to combat the Arian schism prevailing in parts of the empire. Arius, a priest in Alexandria, taught that the Son was not equal to the Father but created by Him. The Holy Spirit, thought to be created by the Son, was subordinate to both. Arius’ teaching was spread throughout the Empire as an “earlier” form of Christianity than that of the official Churches. The Council, called by the emperor to restore peace and unity to the Churches, produced the first part of the Creed we use today. St Athanasius the Great, who was present at the council, wrote that 318 bishops participated. Only two finally refused to accept the Creed and it eventually became the standard of faith in all the Churches of its day.

Only a few fragments of the official acts of the council have survived. The lists of participants which have come down to us vary in the number of bishops named. Nicholas is named in a few of them and the story of his participation has become enshrined in the Church’s liturgy and iconography. 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. When the emperor was notified of what had happened, he pardoned Nicholas and reinstated him.

Since the eye-witnesses at the council, St Athanasius and Eusebius of Caesarea do not mention any such incident in their writings, modern authors tend to discount it. Nevertheless, icons of St. Nicholas often depict his vision of Christ and the Theotokos returning his omophorion and Gospel.

St Nicholas became an increasingly influential public figure later in his episcopate. He successfully intervened to save three convicted looters who had been condemned to death, falsely accused of murder. When a famine struck the region in 333 Nicholas intercepted a ship laden with wheat bound for Constantinople. He persuaded the seamen to leave a substantial portion for the people of Myra. When the ship arrived at the imperial capital it was found that it still had its entire original cargo. Nothing was missing. Another often-repeated story tells how the emperor had levied a heavy tax on the people of Myra. St Nicholas went to Constantinople and pleaded successfully with the emperor to have the taxes reduced. Nicholas dispatched the decree to Myra immediately by sea so that, when the emperor had second thoughts about the tax cut, St Nicholas could tell him that it had already been enforced.

The “Manna” of St. Nicholas

Nicholas died in Myra on December 6, 343 and was buried in his cathedral. His tomb became a famous pilgrimage site, blessed with many miracles. The tomb exuded a sweet-smelling liquid called the Manna of St. Nicholas. As a result his relics were not disturbed and parceled out to other churches. 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 the tomb and spirited away the saint’s body to Bari. It was enshrined by the pope in a great basilica built there in Nicholas’ honor. The Manna continued to exude from the tomb in Bari as it had in Myra. Every year to this day a vial of this fluid is extracted from the tomb, mixed with blessed water and given to the faithful.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today Those infected with the coronavirus and those who care for them
The people of Beirut
+Those who have lost their lives to the coronavirus
+Those who lost their lives in the Beirut explosion

Upcoming Feast Day Liturgical Schedule

Tue 12/8, 6PM - Vespers for the Maternity of St. Anne

NOTE: Evening feast day services will be at 6PM effective September 1 unless announced otherwise.

CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY

Due to the pandemic, we will have **one** Divine Liturgy for Christmas on **December 24 at 5PM**. God willing, we will have a more robust liturgical schedule next year in preparation for the Nativity of Christ.

The Nativity begins this Thursday **December 10** in the Melkite usage. We use this time to prepare ourselves for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. Like all of the fasts during the church year, we abstain from meat, meat products, fish, oil and wine. During this fast, fish is allowed on Saturdays, Sundays, and certain feasts, such as the Presentation of the Theotokos in the Temple (Nov. 21). Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are tools to help us grow closer to Christ. A bodily fast without a spiritual one is just a diet. We are called to pray more, be more humble and repentant. We are also called to be more charitable.

Everyone is called to fast, but we must do so in accordance with our individual circumstances. If you have not fasted before, start slowly. Abstain from meat & meat products on Wednesdays and Fridays. You can then slowly expand your fasting. Fasting is an ascetical labor that takes practice and guidance. If you have any questions about fasting, please reach out to Fr. Bryan.



The Bishop's Appeal 2020 Building A Better Life On A Solid Foundation Through Faith & Family

Blessed Saint Nicholas, whose feast we celebrate with joy today is the Patron Saint of charity and the inspiration for all images of Father Christmas and Santa Claus throughout the world. Let us imitate his loving generosity by making a special gift to the Bishop's Appeal for the support of our Melkite Church in America and for our suffering Christians in Beirut from the recent explosion. **Please give an end-of-year, tax-deductible gift to the Melkite Church in America.** Please give generously so the vital works of our Church can continue and grow. Appeal donation envelopes are available in the narthex. May God bless you for your generosity.

Last Week's Collection

Regular	\$ 944
Candles	\$ 19
Christmas Flowers	\$ 75
Christmas Donations	\$ 50
Total	\$ 1,088

FINANCIALS

<u>Nov 2020</u>	<u>YTD (10/20-11/20)</u>
Income 5,307	Income 10,126
Expenses 7,692	Expenses 11,187
Net (2,385)	Net (1,061)



“A Priest in Body and Soul”

A WORLD-WIDE SYMBOL OF GIFT-GIVING and love, St. Nicholas (270-343) is more revered by the Church as a Wonderworker, both in life and in death. The earliest written source on the life of St. Nicholas we have comes from the early to mid-ninth century, almost 500 years after his death.

There was at least one earlier source which no longer exists. An otherwise unknown author, Archimandrite Michael, writing to someone named Leo, mentions an earlier work that has not come down to us, “Until now the spiritual program of this illustrious pastor was unknown to many people, as you yourself suppose, although some had knowledge of his grace from the lone Acts dedicated to him.”

The absence of earlier sources should not surprise us. Detailed biographies were not common in Asia Minor before the ninth century. We do find St. Nicholas mentioned in earlier writings as well as in prayers and iconography. Churches were dedicated to him, even in Constantinople, so we know that he was widely known and revered in the Greek Church. One telling point is that, while the name Nicholas was not common in the area before the fourth century, its use spread quickly after St. Nicholas’ lifetime.

Towards the middle of the ninth century, St. Methodios, Patriarch of Constantinople, wrote a Life of the saint, perhaps drawing on older sources. Then we have the early tenth-century Greek text of St. Symeon the Translator, who used all the available sources known to him to compile his Life. Finally we have the first Latin Life of St. Nicholas by John the Deacon, adapted from the text of St. Methodios.

The Life of St Nicholas

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, another Nicholas, 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, which 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 Symeon 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 throughout Europe.

Prokimenon

Reader: Precious in the Lord’s eyes is the death of His holy ones.

People: Precious in the Lord’s eyes is the death of His holy ones.

Verse: How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good He has done to me?

People: Precious in the Lord’s eyes is the death of His holy ones.

Reader: Precious in the Lord’s eyes

People: Is the death of His holy ones.

Epistle: Heb. 13:17-21

Alleluia Verses

Your priests, O Lord, shall be clothed with holiness, and Your saintly ones shall shout for joy.

Verse: For the Lord has elected Sion, He has chosen it for His dwelling.

Gospel: Lk 13:10-17

Special Petitions for the Ecumenic Prayer (Inserted after the third petition)

- For all your people who have proven positive with the coronavirus, that they may be restored to full health and offer you their praise and thanksgiving, we pray to you, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all those who have died as a result of the coronavirus that they may be granted rest with the Saints and the mercy of God in the Heavenly Kingdom, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For doctors, nurses, and all in health care, risking their lives to minister to those afflicted with the coronavirus, that they remain safe, and in good health as they serve others, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For all your people in Lebanon who were hurt during the disastrous explosion, that they may be restored to full health, and for those who died that they may be granted rest among the Saints, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.
- For peace throughout the Middle East, especially in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq, we pray to You, Lord, hear us and have mercy.