



*Jesus Christ, our
Saviour and Redeemer*

Holy Protection Orthodox Church

Greetings on this blessed Lord's Day! Please take a green information sheet if this is your first time here. You can put in any collection basket or hand to greeter

IN EMERGENCY CALL/TEXT 813-406-2620 (Fr.'s cell). If in middle of night and no answer, call 813-659-0123 or 813-451-9829 (Pani's cell). If they are off duty please call Parish Council President below

Schedule

Tone 3

Sunday, December 9

10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Chrismation/Baptism
Decker Family
11:15 am Fellowship
Youth Education
Counters: Paula, Olga

Sunday, December 16

10:00 am Divine Liturgy
Betrothal Jonthan and
Gwen
11:15 am Fellowship
Youth Education
Counters: Paula, Ilya

Sunday, December 23

10:00 am Divine Liturgy
11:15 am Fellowship
Youth Education
Counters: Paula,
Marijean

Christmas Services:

Monday December 24

Vigil (Matins and
Liturgy) for the Feast of
the Nativity of our Lord
(Christmas)

6pm-
7:30pm Candlelight
Vigil (Matins and
Liturgy) with
procession, traditional
Christmas carols, etc.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Many years to the Decker family!

This week instead of Holy God, we will be singing As Many As Have Been Baptized.

2019 Church calendars are here! We ask for \$5 to cover the cost of the calendar. Pick yours up in the narthex today.

We have a sign up sheet for house blessings. If you want your house blessed, sign up with your name, address and phone number by December 23 so we can make a schedule of times.

HELP US! The Maintenance Ministry has compiled a list of projects that need to be addressed around the property. "Ongoing projects" are those which need to be done regularly. We ask that you sign up and take responsibility for these tasks for a 3-month period. A second list highlights "One-time repairs". Please review both lists on the bulletin board in the Social Hall and see if you can lend a hand. If you have questions or have items you feel need to be addressed please see any Council member or Mike B.

If you are coming to confession, please be in line by 9:50 am on a normal Sunday. On a Sunday there is a Memorial scheduled, please be in line by 9:35 am. Please line up down the center isle of the church.

Please allow the youth and their families to get their food first at fellowship so the youth can go over the church for their lesson.

Parish council contacts: Scottie (President): 813-629-6027, Brian (Vice President): (813) 763-5226, Rebecca (Treasurer): (813) 763-5225, Paula (813) 838-4554 (Secretary) Tom Moore Financial Secretary Sign up for fellowship! It can be as simple as bagels or donuts. Please see the board in the hall, or a council member if you have any questions.

We will be collecting items for A Kids Place, a foster home in Brandon. We will begin on November 25 and collect through December 16. Look for the tree in the hall to pick an ornament for what to purchase for this great charity.

Save the date!! There will be a Lenten Retreat on March 23.

Prayer Corner: Please pray for the ailing: Mary, Kathy, Susan, Helen, Neila, Olexander, Anna, John, Carol, Mat. Mary, P.Vera, SD. John, Randee, John, Ryan, Marie, Paul, Mary, Pangratios, Tikon, Vasili, Jeremiah, Dcn. Luke, Maria, John David, Elisabeth, Joshua, Alexander, Nicholas, Rebecca, Genevieve, Panteleimon, Vladimir, Margaret, David, Sarah, Jonathon, Simon, Gene, Judy, Fr. Michael, Fr. John, Anastasia, Demitrios, Alexandra, Israel, George, Michelle, George, Beth, Alex, George, Joseph, Jaqueline, Michael, Geverlyn, Thomas, Norma, Sally, Sarah, Derek, Susan, Lucy, Beth, Kathy, Phyllis, John, David, Shirley, Kalie, Madeline, Thomas, Patricia, Marie, Archimandrite David, Jake, Tom, Beverly, Taylor, Reghyn, Sylvia, Andreas, Josh, Nicole, Joyce, Sandy, Yamileth, Georgina, Kathy, Pam, Ann, Eli, Shay, Ocean, Lauren, Donna, Kim, Lori, Nancy, George, Sharon, Sylvia, Kristi, Gary, Tori, Joan, Thomas, Susan

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. Saint 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 kindness 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 Saint 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. Saint Nicholas also provided gold for the other daughters, thereby saving the family from falling into spiritual destruction. In bestowing charity, Saint 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 Saint 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. Saint 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, Saint 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, Saint 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, Saint 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 Saint Constantine (May 21) as emperor, Saint Nicholas was restored to his flock, which joyfully received their guide and intercessor.

Despite his great gentleness of spirit and purity of heart, Saint 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 Saint Nicholas was a participant in the First Ecumenical Council. This Council proclaimed the Nicean Symbol of Faith, and he stood up against the heretic Arius with the likes of Saints Sylvester the Bishop of Rome (January 2), Alexander of Alexandria (May 29), Spyridon of Trimythontos (December 12) and other Fathers of the Council.

Saint 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 Saint 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 Saint Nicholas. Evil men slandered them before the emperor, and the officers were sentenced to death. Appearing to Saint Constantine in a dream, Saint 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, Saint 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.