

:: The Life of St. Nicholas of Myra ::
by St. Nikolai Velimirovic

This glorious saint, celebrated even today throughout the entire world, was the only son of his eminent and wealthy parents, Theophanes and Nona, citizens of the city of Patara in Lycia. Since he was the only son bestowed on them by God, the parents returned the gift to God by dedicating their son to Him. St. Nicholas learned of the spiritual life from his uncle Nicholas, Bishop of Patara, and was tonsured a monk in the Monastery of New Zion founded by his uncle. Following the death of his parents, Nicholas distributed all his inherited goods to the poor, not keeping anything for himself. As a priest in Patara, he was known for his charity, even though he carefully concealed his charitable works, fulfilling the words of the Lord: "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3).

When he gave himself over to solitude and silence, thinking to live that way until his death, a voice from on high came to him: "Nicholas, for your ascetic labor, work among the people, if thou desirest to be crowned by Me." Immediately after that, by God's wondrous providence, he was chosen archbishop of the city of Myra in Lycia.

Merciful, wise and fearless, Nicholas was a true shepherd to his flock. During the persecution of Christians under Diocletian and Maximian, he was cast into prison, but even there he instructed the people in the Law of God. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea [325] and, out of great zeal for the truth, struck the heretic Arius with his hand. For this act he was removed from the Council and from his archiepiscopal duties, until the Lord Christ Himself and the Most-holy Theotokos appeared to several of the chief hierarchs and revealed their approval of Nicholas.

A defender of God's truth, this wonderful saint was ever bold as a defender of justice among the people. On two occasions, he saved three men from an undeserved sentence of death. Merciful, truthful, and a lover of justice, he walked among the people as an angel of God. Even during his lifetime, the people considered him a saint and invoked his aid in difficulties and in distress. He appeared both in dreams and in person to those who called upon him, and he helped them easily and speedily, whether close at hand or far away. A light shone from his face as it did from the face of Moses, and he, by his presence alone, brought comfort, peace and good will among men.

In old age he became ill for a short time and entered into the rest of the Lord, after a life full of labor and very fruitful toil, to rejoice eternally in the Kingdom of Heaven, continuing to help the faithful on earth by his miracles and to glorify his God. He entered into rest on December 6, 343.

Any announcements for the Sunday bulletin? Please submit by Wednesday each week to Fr. Andrew, by email or phone.



St. George Orthodox Church of Spring Valley

211 E. Minnesota St., Spring Valley, IL 61362
Church Office: (815) 664-4540
www.stgeorgeorthodox.org

Pastor: Father Andrew Kishler
frandrew@stgeorgeorthodox.org
(773) 575-3272 (cell)

December 8, 2013 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Venerable Patapios of Thebes; Sophronios, bishop of Cyprus; Apostles Sosthenes, Apollos, Crispos, Caesar and Epaphroditos of the Seventy; Martyr Parthenios

Orthros Morning Prayers, 9:00 am
Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am
Coffee hour afterwards – all are welcome!

Today's Liturgy is offered by Robert Abraham and family.
May God grant them many years!

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 7):

Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross; Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the mourning of the ointment-bearing women into joy, and didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim warning that Thou hast risen, O Christ, granting the world great mercy.

Troparion of St. George (Tone 4):

Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and succour of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among martyrs, the victory-clad George: intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls!

St. George is a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
The Most Reverend Metropolitan PHILIP, primate
The Right Reverend Bishop ANTHONY, Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest
www.antiochian.org

Kontakion of Advent (Tone 3):

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth in an ineffable manner to the Word before the ages. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest, and glorify with the angels and shepherds Him who shall appear by His own will as a new babe, being God before the ages.

Orthros Gospel Reading: Mark 16:1-8

When the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb at the rising of the sun. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back; --it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a long white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, “Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.” And they went out quickly and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.

Epistle Reading: Ephesians 2:14-22

BRETHREN, Christ is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:2-14

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.” And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was

made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed and not on the sabbath day.” Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, and daughter of Abraham who Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” As Jesus said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and service at St. George, consult the calendar on our newly-updated website, www.stgeorgeorthodox.org.

Our good friend **Deacon Saed Rihani** was recently elevated to the status of Archdeacon by His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP. Read the full article, “*Metropolitan PHILIP Presides at Cicero Parish Anniversary Celebration*,” with pictures, at www.antiochian.org. May God grant him many years!

Fr. Patrick Kinder of St. Ignatius Church in Madison, WI has graciously donated to us a box of CDs of their “Akathist of Thanksgiving” recording. (This is the service we served here at St. George last night.) The CDs are available in the basement for a suggested donation of \$15 each; all proceeds will go to St. George Church. Please see Fr. Andrew or Kh. Patty if you are interested in purchasing one.

The Orthodox season of Advent is a 40-day period of preparation for our celebration of Christmas. This is a good time to increase our devotion to the Lord through prayer, church attendance and personal Bible reading. The Sacrament of Confession is available before and after each service, or by appointment with the priest. Please also do not forget the poor and lonely among us during this holy time. If you have any questions about fasting or other Christian disciplines, do not hesitate to ask Fr. Andrew.

Our next baptism will be that of **Jax Ronald Thompson**, on Sunday, December 22, at the Divine Liturgy. Please join us for this blessed event!

Looking ahead, our **Christmas vigil** will be held Saturday, Dec. 24 at 6:00 pm.