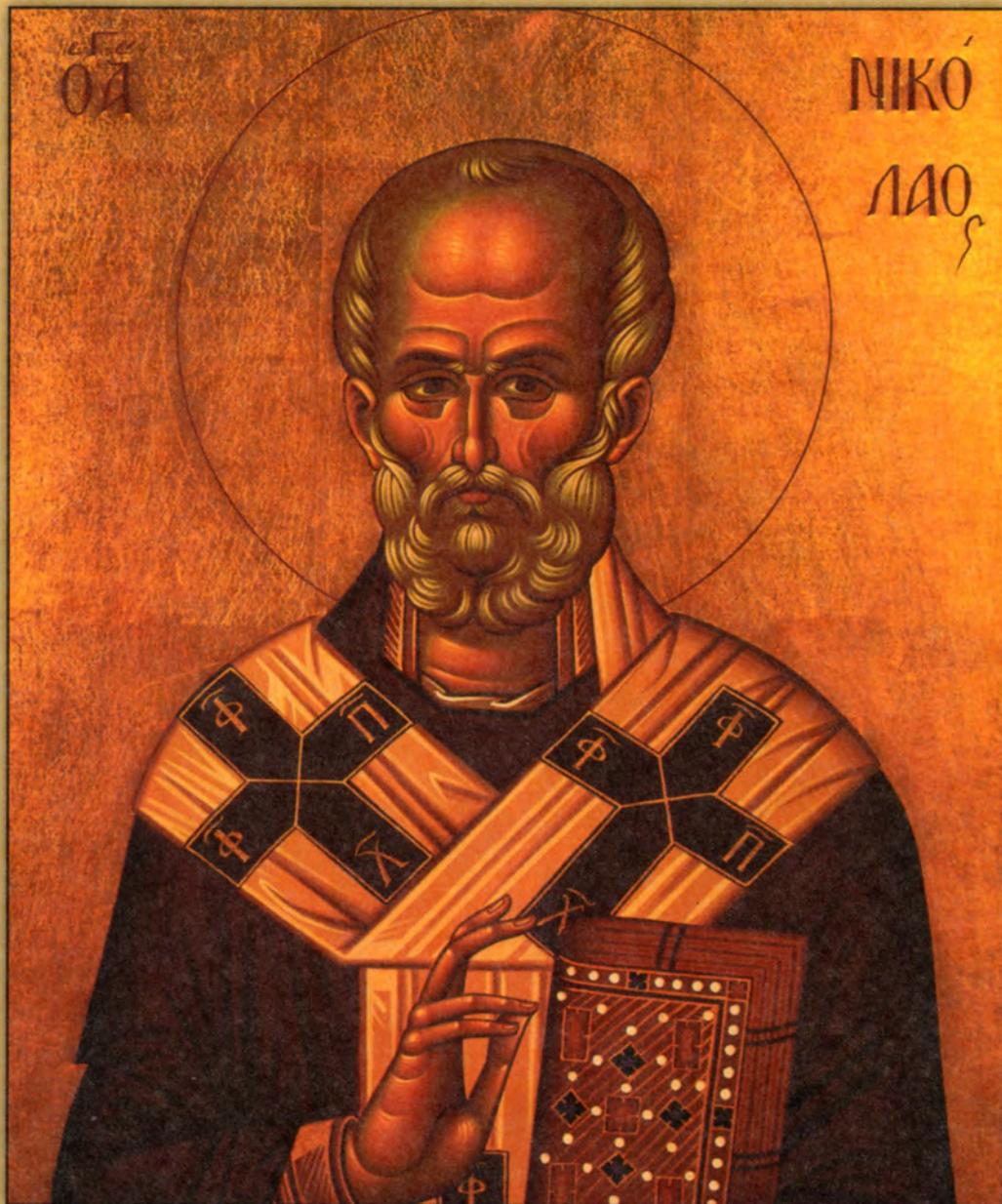


TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Saint Nicholas of Myra -- December 6th

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 27th weekend after Pentecost we also celebrate the feast of St. Nicholas of Myra, the patron of our Eparchy. He is one of the most popular of all Eastern Christian saints.

Our readings are from Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Hebrews and both Gospels are taken from passages in Luke's Gospel.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul relates his thoughts that the struggles for spiritual growth are very similar to "warfare". You have to put your whole energy into the task and you have to always be vigilant.

In this letter to the Hebrews, he exhorts them and us to always keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and to try and imitate Him. That is exactly how St. Nicholas lived.

The Gospel for this weekend relates the miracle story where Jesus cured 10 lepers but only one came back to thank Him. This highlights the need we all have for thanking God for all that we receive in life. This requires that we thank Him even for life's challenges since our response to the challenges of life can help us spiritually grow.

The Gospel passage used for the feast relates the "Great Discourse" or the "Beatitudes". One of the truly poignant lines in the Discourse is this: *Blest shall you be when men hate you, when they ostracize you and insult you and proscribe your name as evil because of the Son of Man. On the day they do so, rejoice and exult, for your*



reward shall be great in heaven.

This truly exhorts us to always keep our eyes fixed on the goal of life which is to achieve, with God's help, a deeper union with Him. We have to make this the main priority in our lives. Nothing is really more important although I know that quite often we don't realize it. We humans tend to get so caught up in just living that we make other things a priority.

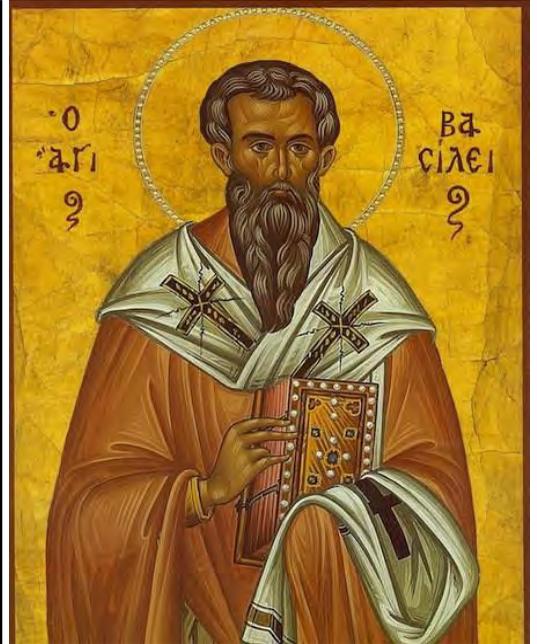
We have a model in St. Nicholas. He made his relationship with God the most important thing in his life. Because of this he truly became a wonderworker, someone who made God real to others.

THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

How do we understand the genealogy found in Luke 3:23-28 which traces Jesus' ancestry back to "the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God"? The question is: Does faithfulness to this New Testament material obligate us to interpret the Genesis accounts not as myths like other ancient Near Eastern literature, but rather as historical occurrences? Do we have to postulate an historical Adam and Eve?

It must be admitted from the outset that Paul and the other Jewish and Christian writers of that time did interpret the Genesis stories as if Adam were as historically concrete as Abraham, Moses and Ezra. That is because (1) there was nothing in the sciences of their day to suggest that the texts and genealogies need be understood any other way, and (2) their literary exposure to the pagan myths of their day did nothing to enhance their appreciation for mythic categories or help them find such categories in the Hebrew Scriptures. For the apostles, myths were pagan stories about gods breeding, fighting and misbehaving. But their literary limitations do not define our boundaries any more than their scientific limitations do. Doubtless the apostles accepted as scientific fact many things we would now reject, but this does not limit us in our reading of the sciences. In the same way we may appreciate the category of myth when archaeology puts into our hands treasures unknown to the first century.

The stories of the first man and



woman (Adam and Eve) do indeed read as if they were history but then all stories do, including Christ's parables. The decision regarding their historicity must be based not on whether or not they read like history but on the recognition that they belong to a particular literary genre. The story of the Prodigal Son reads like history, too, but we do not regard it as historical because we know it was offered as a parable, not as an historical reminiscence. Now that we have at our literary disposal other myths from the ancient Near East, we can also recognize that the early chapters of Genesis were offered to the reader as myth.

More yet to follow!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Question: Do Eastern Catholics believe in transubstantiation?

The term *transubstantiation* is not used in Eastern theology. Rather a Greek term **Metousiosis** (μετουσίωσις) is used to signify what happens to the bread and wine during the Divine Liturgy that means a change of ousia (οὐσία, "essence, inner reality"). The term *transubstantiation* is based on Aristotelian philosophy which states that the substance and accidents of the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. The Eastern expression does not deal with *substance* and *accidents* but rather with the very essence of the bread and wine.

The teaching on the Eucharist dealing with the Real Presence, however, is very clear and concise in both the East and West. That is, *Jesus is present* under the forms of bread and wine when we call down the Holy Spirit to confirm what He, Jesus, did at the Last Supper.

For the East the philosophy of Aristotle does not enter the picture. It is simply acknowledged that the bread and wine are no longer bread and wine but are really the Body and Blood of Jesus. There are two changes that take place during the Anaphora, which at the very core of the Divine Liturgy: the bread and wine cease to exist as bread and wine because the very "essence" of the bread and wine is changed. This is, of course, a mystery which we really cannot comprehend but only believe. Does it make any sense? Probably not but because Jesus said that He would be remembered every time His apostles took bread and wine and remembered what He said and did, He would be present. We take Jesus at His word. He is truly present to us when we do what He did and remember what He intended it to mean.

So, while the East does not use the Roman Catholic term *transubstantiation* nor the philosophy that underlies it, there is certainly belief in the Real



Presence in the gifts that we bring. We must always remember that the transformed gifts are truly "spiritual food" that can support us in our attempt to change our lives and to truly transform them so that we more and more begin to imitate Jesus.

We must always remember that just as the bread and wine is miraculously changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, we are changed if we embrace the attitude of Christ which is namely to offer our lives back to God in true thanksgiving for the gift of life.

I HOPE THIS MAKES SENSE!

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



VIRTUAL ADULT DISCUSSION SESSIONS SCHEDULED

Four sessions are scheduled. Each will take place at 8:00 PM. They are:

Thursday, December 10th

Thursday, December 17th

Still time to Register if you want to take part in these sessions. Go to:

stmichaelarchangel.org

CHRISTMAS DIVINE LITURGY

After talking with a number of members, I have decided to announce that there will be only one Divine Liturgy celebrated for Christmas and that will be on Christmas Day. There will be no Christmas Eve Liturgy. This Liturgy will be live-streamed.

CHRISTMAS DAY DIVINE LITURGY

DECEMBER 25th @ 10:00 AM

Since Christmas falls on a Friday and because I serve a second parish, the Liturgy will not be served on the day after. We will celebrate the second Christmas Liturgy on

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 27th @ 10:00 AM

As you know, we continue with our limited seating even during this sacred time.

LIVING A NEW LIFE

Living a new life means to grow in our awareness of the past events that may have an influence on our thinking and, as a result, on our behaviors.

This requires that we take time to reflect upon and assess our thinking. Often people are not even aware of those things that influence their attitudes and behaviors.

Growing spiritually takes work. It just doesn't happen because we go to church once a week. And it takes hard work - work which requires us to take a honest look at ourselves to determine how we actually think about things and, therefore, live a certain way.

For example, there seems to be two common human behaviors that stymie spiritual growth: "holding grudges" and "blaming others for our feelings". When we hold grudges we only damage ourselves - we sour, I like to say, our inner feelings. We prevent ourselves from achieving inner peace.

When we blame others for our feelings we tell ourselves that we are not responsible for our lives. We forget that no one can make us feel the way that we do. Our feelings are our feelings!

(Continued on page 8)



HOW TO PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE THE DIVINE LITURGY

As my readers have probably guessed, the thoughts in this article come from my own work at attempting to make my personal experience of the Divine Liturgy something that promotes true spiritual growth. It has been a long time since I have done a liturgical scavenger hunt which was one of my efforts to help people discover a real personal experience when attending the Divine Liturgy. Of course you have to “want” to discover the real meaning of the Liturgy for yourself. You have to want the Liturgy to be more than just fulfilling some-kind-of obligation.

Let me state this very boldly. **THERE IS NO REAL OBLIGATION TO ATTEND THE DIVINE LITURGY!** If you don't attend, you miss a great opportunity to spiritually grow. If you attend only because you feel that God obliges you to attend, it has no value. He didn't create robots and He doesn't have slaves. He wants us to freely and voluntarily come to Liturgy in order to derive the benefit of communal worship of our loving God. Something happens when we join with others to worship God.

Now I know that you have heard me say this a hundred times before, our worship of God is our sincere desire to thank Him for the gift of life and, because of our thankfulness, to offer our life back to Him. We do this with Jesus, our Brother. When you think about His life, you see that He offered His life back to the Father in



thanksgiving for the gift of life. We are called to join with Him in doing the same. Of course this requires that we are thankful for the life we have. This also requires that we desire to be in “communion” with Him. This means that we have a sense the importance to have a belief in a Supreme Being, in God.

Why even believe that there is a Supreme Being? This belief can help you to deal with the vicissitudes of earthly life. Most people realize at some level that they have very little control over life, even though they want to have control. To believe in a benevolent Supreme Being, helps us to accept life as it is given to us. So when we come and offer, together with Jesus our life back to God, we can gain interior peace.

This feeling is consummated with the reception of Holy Communion which joins us to God in a very special way. Of course this all takes basic belief in God and Jesus.

BECOMING AN ADULT CHILD OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

This, I believe, may be my last issue of this article since I'm quickly running out of ideas about what it means to be an ADULT CHILD of the Heavenly Father. I'm sure that there must be more to this topic. I would encourage my readers to send their thoughts to me about this topic. I only know that we must put aside our childish thoughts of God and life in order to spiritually grow. I have tried my very best to express this during the past number of weeks. As I shared with you, this was an inspiration from God. I never really thought about this before and then very suddenly I was filled with the desire to explore this idea.

As I have talked with many Christians, they all tell me that their ideas about God have come from their early childhood catechism sessions and that, unfortunately, they retain many childish ideas about God and their relationship with God. More times than not it is always about God as an angry parent who punishes His children in order to get them to live appropriately. That paradigm is so very inappropriate for an Adult Child. We have to put away our childish notions of God and develop "mature ideas"

about Him and our relationship with Him.

I truly believe that spiritual growth and becoming an Adult Child of God are intimately joined. I truly believe that God wants us to become Adult Children so that we can cooperate with His Holy Spirit to become mature and true Christians - to be people who imitate the archetype for humans, Jesus Christ.

First and foremost we, if we want to be an Adult Child, have to come to the realization that God wants us to freely and voluntarily return His love. If we believe that He will punish us if we don't return His love, then our love is not "freely" returned. Further, we have to truly believe that He made us in His

image and likeness and is sharing His LIFE with us as well as His Spirit. If this is true, then how can He punish us without technically punishing Himself?

I suspect that many people are fearful to even embrace some of my ideas for fear that they are wrong and therefore they will be punished. Think about that! We are called to have an adult relationship with God. Of course this means that first we must have adult relationships with others!



Schedule of Services

Sunday, December 6 - 27th Weekend after Pentecost - St Nicholas
10:00 AM – Special Intention

28th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - Tone 3

Monday, December 7 - Ambrose, Archbishop
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, December 8 – Maternity of the Holy Anna
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, December 9 - Patapius, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, December 10 - Mennas & Others, Martyrs
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Friday, December 11 - Daniel the Stylite, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, December 12 - Spiridon, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, December 13 - Weekend of the Forefathers
10:00 AM + Stephen Mihalko & Catherine Mihalko; Kotlinski Family
+ Robert Sowinski; Christine Sowinski

(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)

How we respond to what others may do or say is our response! We develop our own patterns of responding to the events of life. Once we accept this fact and take responsibility for our behaviors, we can change those behaviors with some work. The problem is that humans frequently don't want to own the fact that their feelings are their own problem and that we can't blame others for those feelings.

For example, I have frequently heard people say: *She/he made me angry by what they did or said.* The fact of the matter is, rather, that when we become angry it is because that is our response to what someone did or said. **IT IS OUR RESPONSE.** And who is in charge of our responses to what others do our say? **US,** and no one else. I know that many may find this hard to believe, but believe me, it is the truth.

What are your thoughts?



St. Michael the Archangel
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Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

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Cell: (313) 580-4412
WRuchgy@gmail.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
In most instances membership
required for six months

Funerals
Membership of an immediate
family member required

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
586.755.3129

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.734.7078

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Rev Deacon Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

BECOMING A HEALING PRESENCE



We always, always begin with Christ and His Word. We find in Ephesians, “see that you walk circumspectly, redeeming the time”. that’s our job, to redeem the time. Christ is our Way and Truth and Life, and in that sense, our Time. He redeems time through us.

The true meaning of time gives us the freedom to love, to take the risk to love. Time and eternity are different; they are not mutually exclusive but complementary. We are not to become timeless but to transfigure time. Some of our common expressions give us a view into how we can misuse time, such as “killing time” or “wasting time” or even “saving time.”

Time isn’t ours to fritter away or to save. Time is ours to transform and transfigure.

So the meaning of time is found in the risk of love, in relationships, in response and openness to the other. Of course, our basic relationship is with Jesus Christ. We try to use our God-given time to be as aware and connected with Him as we can and then to do what He has put us on the planet to do. Time is a gift to become more of a healing presence.

Eastern Christians use two Greek words to describe time: *chronos* and *kairos*. Chronos refers to measured time: Tuesday follows Monday, July precedes August. We need measured time to be able to communicate, think and live rationally. Kairos is God’s time, God’s eternal moment in the Chronos. We try, as much as we can, to keep those two aspects of time in mind.

An Eastern Christian philosophy of time differs from secular philosophies. For example, Plato presented an idea of time that is circular. Time revolves on itself. What happens has a beginning and ending, all moving in a circular way. The secular world, by contrast, explains time exclusively in terms of Chronos, linear, 24/7 and 365. That’s time, tick, tick, tick. It simply goes along, inexorably, in a straight line.

A Christian view of time is cruciform. All events that happened before the Cross, for the Christian, led up to the Cross. All. Subsequently, all events after the Cross are defined by the Cross and look back to the Cross for meaning. So the Cross is the center of time; it magnifies and gives perspective to time.

Time as cruciform is a valid model for history, the larger picture, and is also valid for our personal lives, the smaller picture.

You need to take a little “time” to think about these thoughts!

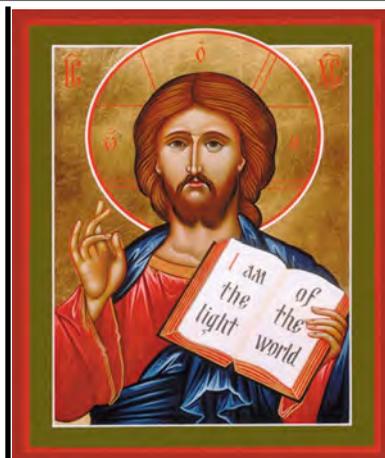
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN TODAY?

As I highlighted in the last issue of this article, there was, in the history of astronomy, a real shift in paradigm going from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican paradigm. Significantly, this change was not about a detail or two; it affected how the “whole” was seen. Both paradigms are ways of looking at the same phenomena (in this case the solar system), but the *phenomena* are seen differently. The shift in how the “whole” was seen affected how all the details were seen.

So also in contemporary Christianity. The paradigm change is about how the “whole” of Christianity is viewed. The same “phenomena” are in view (God, the Bible, Jesus, the creeds, faith and so forth), but *they are seen differently*. The analogy to what is happening in Christianity is not perfect, of course. Science proceeds by different rules than religion, and one may speak of the Copernican paradigm as “verified” and the Ptolemaic paradigm as “wrong.” Such verification and falsification are not so readily possible in religion.

But the analogy does work in this way. Christians in North America are living in a time of paradigm change and conflict. The conflict is not about a few items of Christian theology or behavior, but between two comprehensive ways of seeing Christianity as a whole.

Seeing the “heart of Christianity” as a whole involves two major elements. First, how is the *Christian tradition* seen? Christian tradition includes the Bible plus whatever elements in postbiblical tradition are considered normative - for most Christians, the creeds, and for many Christians, doctrinal statements from their own denominations. Second, how is the *Christian life* seen? What is most central to it? What is it about? Is it, for example, about believing and doing what we need in order to be saved? Or is it about something else?



The earlier paradigm’s view of Christianity is very familiar. Most of us over age 40 grew up with it. It has been the most common form of Christianity for the past few hundred years. Today, it is affirmed by fundamentalist, most conservative-evangelical, and many Pentecostal Christians. And because it dominates Christian television and radio, it is the most publicly visible vision of Christianity and the Christian life.

I wonder how my readers view Christianity? What is it all about? Do you have a clear idea and understanding of what it is to be a Christian - a follower of Jesus?



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 48 27th Weekend After Pentecost December 5-6, 2020

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

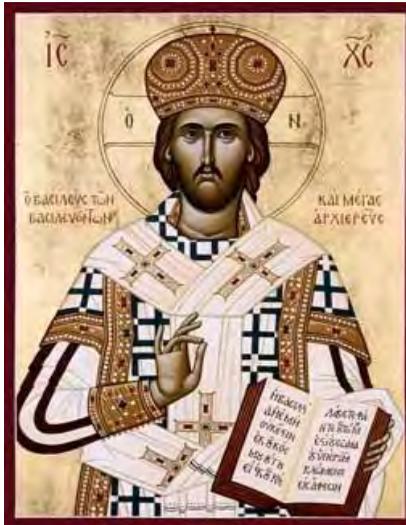
As I ended the last issue of this article, I tried to stress that we must begin to “see” Christ in our lives. Only Jesus has the power that we seek. Only Jesus can revolutionize our minds “in God’s way, in the goodness and holiness of the truth.”

But, typical of Jesus, His form of revolution is both gently and strong. He does not want to bulldoze His way into our minds, clearing out piles of feelings here and destroying structures built on foundation of false ideas there. His way is far more sensitive than that, far more respectful of the uniqueness and fragility of each human being, far more constructive and far-sighted. His way of revolutionizing our minds is by revolutionizing one by one each event in our memories (as well as all the contents of the other functions of our minds).

Our memories retain for us our experiences; they are the points of convergence for our thoughts,

decisions and feelings. It is in our memories that many of our present-day feelings have their roots, that many of the thoughts that now rule our minds have their origins, that the decisions of the past continue to live and affect the present. Each of our experiences has been carefully recorded by our brains and is available for replay, consciously or unconsciously, at any time. It is a medical fact establish by many researchers that our entire past is stored within us and greatly affects our present-day lives, whether we want it to or not.

All we need to do, then, to understand our need to allow Christ to enter every event of our lives is to remember the past and the events of the past. We need salvation in each of our memories if we are to grow spiritually to reach the destiny God has planned for us as His children. Think about this and then ask Christ to heal your memories.



The Legendary Saint Nicholas

The absence of the “hard facts” of history is not necessarily an obstacle to the popularity of saints, as the devotion to St. Nicholas shows. Both the Eastern and Western Churches honor him, and it is claimed that, after the Theotokos, he is the saint most pictured by Christian artists. And yet, historically, we can pinpoint only the fact that Nicholas was the fourth-century bishop of Myra, a city in Lycia, a province of Asia Minor.

As with many of the saints, however, we are able to capture the relationship which Nicholas had with God through the admiration which Christians have had for him – an admiration expressed in the colorful stories which have been told and retold through the centuries.

Perhaps the best-known story about Nicholas concerns his charity toward a poor man who was unable to provide dowries for his three

daughters of marriageable age. Rather than see them forced into prostitution, Nicholas secretly tossed a bag of gold through the poor man’s window on three separate occasions, thus enabling the daughters to be married. Over the centuries, this particular legend evolved into the custom of gift-giving on the saint’s feast. In the English-speaking countries, St. Nicholas became, by a twist of the tongue, Santa Claus – further expanding the example of generosity portrayed by this holy bishop.

The critical eye of modern history makes us take a deeper look at the legends surrounding St. Nicholas. But perhaps we can utilize the lesson taught by his legendary charity, look deeper at our approach to material goods in the Christmas season and seek ways to extend our sharing to those in real need.