



## St. Nicholas the Wonderworker December 6th

Saint Nicholas was born about 275 AD in Myra, a town of Lycia in Asia Minor. His uncle was the bishop of the town and educated Nicholas for life in the Church. In due time, Nicholas was ordained by his uncle and eventually succeeded him as Bishop the Christian Church in the Asia Minor city of Myra (now Demre, Turkey) in the fourth century A D .

He is beloved throughout the Christian East for his kindness and help, both during his life and afterward. He is called "Wonderworker" (or "Miraculous" or "Miracle-Worker", different translations of the Greek "thavmatourgos") for

the miracles which he performed and which he still performs, by God's grace. Many accounts of Saint Nicholas are available on the World Wide Web.

The most famous story about St. Nicholas concerns a man who, because of extreme poverty, had agreed to sell his three daughters into slavery. St. Nicholas heard about it and came in the night, leaving behind him a bag with enough gold in it to save one of the children. Three times he came secretly so that the man would not know from where the money came. On the third night, the man saw him and asked for the Saint's forgiveness because he had nearly sold his children as slaves. Because of this and similar acts, St. Nicholas became the patron saint of children and the type of the cheerful giver of good gifts.

In the Protestant West, which suppressed the invocation of saints, Saint Nicholas became popularly known as Santa Claus. In accordance with early Christian tradition, saints are remembered in the Orthodox Church on the date of their passing from this life into the next. Saint Nicholas is thus remembered on December 6. Orthodox Christianity maintains that even though people are dead according to this life, that they are alive in the spiritual realm, and continue to pray for us. Our "prayers to the saints" are actually requests that they pray for us, much as we ask believers who are still alive in the flesh to pray for us.

The remains of St. Nicholas now repose principally in Bari, Italy, having been transported there in 1087 A.D. after Myra fell to Islamic invaders. A fragrant liquid (myrrh) still exudes from the relics. Miracles are performed even today through the intercessions of St. Nicholas. Turkey also claims to possess bones of Saint Nicholas.

### **Apolytikion of Nicholas the Wonderworker in the Fourth Tone**

A model of faith and the image of gentleness, the example of your life has shown you forth to your sheepfold to be a master of temperance. You obtained thus through being lowly, gifts from on high, and riches through poverty. Nicholas, our father and priest of priests, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.

### **Kontakion of Nicholas the Wonderworker in the Third Tone**

Saintly One, (St. Nicholas) in Myra you proved yourself a priest; for in fulfilling the Gospel of Christ, venerable One, you laid down your life for your people and saved the innocent from death. For this you were sanctified as One learned in divine grace.