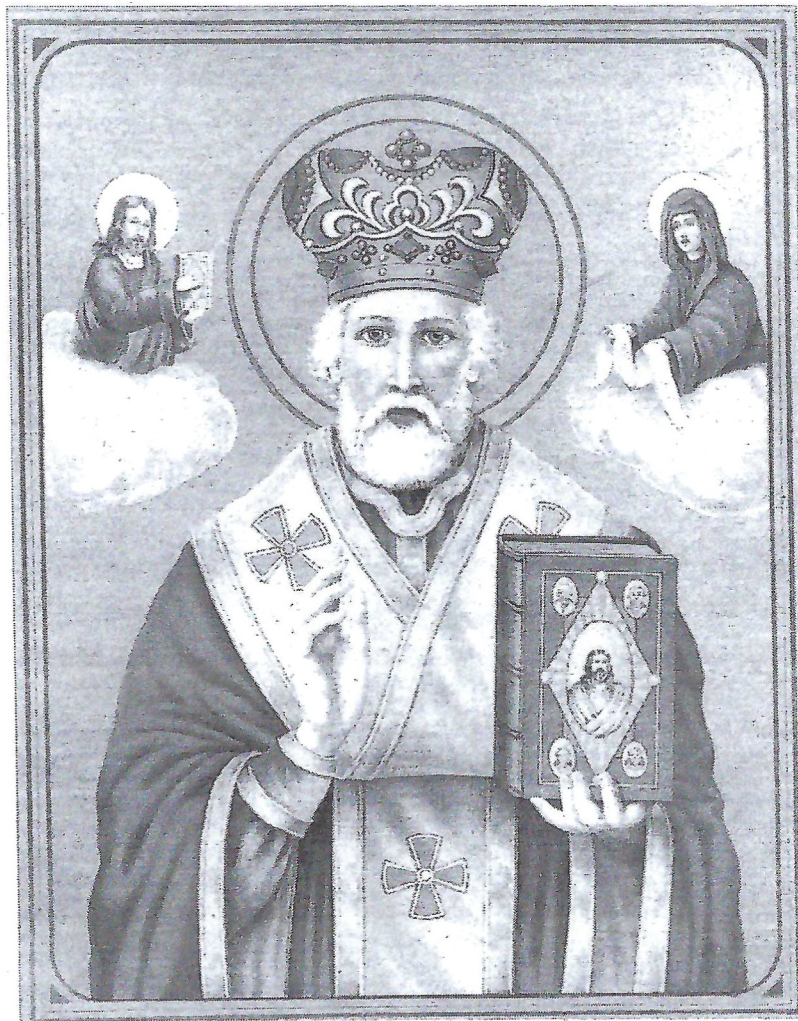


"More Blessed to Give than to Receive"
**LEGENDS AND MIRACLES
OF SAINT NICHOLAS**



By Michael Roman, GCU Honorary Editor
and
Knight of St. Gregory the Great

Saint Nicholas of Myra

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DEDICATION



SIR KNIGHT MICHAEL ROMAN fostered a lifelong devotion to Saint Nicholas of Myra, patron saint of the Greek Catholic Church in Europe, the Byzantine Catholic Church in America, and the Greek Catholic Union of the U.S.A. He likewise became a student of the life, legends and lore of the popular saint. His findings were shared with members in the official publications of the Greek Catholic Union which he edited for 44 1/2 years until his retirement in 1981. Then for 15 additional years he continued to research and write on numerous subjects. He had compiled the material for this book on Saint Nicholas shortly before his death on September 27, 1995. In his honor and memory the Greek Catholic Union of the U.S.A. publishes and dedicates this volume. Since the book was in draft format at the time of Mr. Roman's death we have included the author's original dedication.

"This collection of Saint Nicholas legends and miracles is sincerely dedicated to my departed beloved wife—Mary Radvak Roman—who also was a true helpmate who encouraged and inspired me to write 'for the people'."

Michael Roman, K.S.G.G. and GCU Honorary Editor

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Saint Nicholas of Myra

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“More Blessed to Give than to Receive”

by Michael Roman

GCU Honorary Editor and K.S.G.G.

INTRODUCTION

With the help of God and His blessings the wooden GCU St. Nicholas Chapel was completed in 1992 as a significant centennial contribution of the Greek Catholic Union. It is, indeed, a fitting tribute to the priests and lay founders who chose St. Nicholas of Myra as the Heavenly Patron of our great fraternal life insurance organization.

It is our purpose to write a series of articles about the life, legends, tales, miracles and charitable deeds of St. Nicholas whose heavenly patronage has significantly helped the Greek Catholic Union and the Byzantine Catholic Church in America.

It is our prayer that St. Nicholas will continue being our helpful intercessor before the Throne of God as he has been in the past. **S Nami Boh! God be with us!**

One of the most widely known Saints of the Greek (Byzantine) Catholics is Nicholas of Myra, the Miracle Worker who is the Heavenly Patron of the Greek Catholic Union and of the Byzantine Catholic Church. He is just as popular in other religions throughout the world. And he was just as popular and revered in the tenth century when a Greek historian wrote the following about him:

“Wherever there are people, in rural areas and in cities, in villages and on the islands, in the farthest parts of the earth, his name (Nicholas) is revered and churches are built in his honor. All children, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, all revere him and call upon him for protection. His favors, without any limits as to time, have been continuously poured through the centuries all over the world. The Scythians know about these favors and so do the Indians and the Barbarians and the Romans.”

This well-known holy man, whose guiding principle was **“It is more blessed to give than to receive,”** has certainly shown to the world the importance of charitable deeds.

Saint Nicholas was born in the second half of



The birth of St. Nicholas

the third century in Patara, a city in Lycia of Asia Minor. His wealthy parents, Theophan and Nonna, were very pious and religious and hoped their son would follow their example of true Christian living.

Shortly after the birth of Nicholas, the God-loving parents noticed the appearance of a miracle in their son. According to legend, the newly-born child Nicholas stood erect on his feet for three hours during the baptismal ceremony. The parents beamed with happiness over this miracle, and felt that God had given them a very holy son. Nicholas was still in his swaddling clothes when he began fasting. On Wednesdays and Fridays he abstained from breastfeeding until the evenings of those days.

**The Icon of
Saint Nicholas' First Day at School**
Saint Nicholas was a good, obedient and loving



St. Nicholas' first day at school

child. He first received his spiritual education from his deeply religious parents. They supplemented this early education by taking him to a church school whose principal was Bishop Nicholas, an uncle of our Saint Nicholas. In the book, "Icons of St. Nick," there is a representation of St. Nicholas' first day at school. It is a Russian icon of the end of the 17th century and was painted on wood.

This icon is thusly described in the book in the following paragraph:

"The boy receives the blessing of the principal. His arms are humbly crossed. He is shown with his father who lifts his hands in prayer. The classmates are seated on benches in the background. The two disciples, shown here, according to later stories, are the brothers of St. Nick who had previously enrolled in the same school."

Nicholas spent his childhood receiving a religious education from his parents, and was deeply interested in the Holy Scriptures. He had no interest in children's games and other forms of entertainment. It was in his early teens that Nicholas developed a sincere and intense love for the Church.

Having heard about Egypt and the Holy Land

during his studies of the Holy Scriptures, the young Nicholas went on a pilgrimage to those places. It was on this holy journey that Nicholas made the decision to consecrate himself to the service of God.

At his ordination to the Holy Priesthood performed by his uncle, Bishop Nicholas, he heard the following prophetic words spoken by the ordaining prelate:

"Friends, here we see a new sun rising above the earth, bringing joy and happiness to all people, especially those who suffer. Indeed blessed will be the parish under the pastorate of Father Nicholas. He will bring back to the True Faith those who have strayed, and he will bring comfort to those who suffer in any way."

During his service in the Vineyard of Christ, St. Nicholas did give help to those who suffered, brought assistance to the poor and needy, strengthened the weak believers by preaching the True Faith. As a priest and archbishop the Miracle Worker of Myra was a sterling example of pure and virtuous Christian living.

Especially did he help the poor and needy. After his wealthy parents died, St. Nicholas used the entire inheritance to aid the poverty-stricken and performed other noteworthy charitable deeds. He was, indeed, a firm believer in the words spoken by our Savior: **"It is more blessed to give than to receive."**

Three Maidens Saved

We have read or heard many times how St. Nicholas used some of his inheritance to save three maidens from taking the sinful path because their poor father could not afford a dowry for each marriageable daughter, but this legend is certainly worthy of being repeated.

Soon after receiving his parents' wealth, St. Nicholas heard about the plight of a once wealthy father who became so poor that he was unable to marry off his three eligible daughters because each of them did not have a dowry.

St. Nicholas came to the financial rescue of the daughters in three different periods. It was a very dark night when St. Nicholas secretly hurled a bag of gold through an open window of the poor man's hut. The gold was earmarked for the oldest daughter without divulging the name of the benefactor. The oldest daughter was soon married. Undoubtedly, she prayed with gratitude to her unknown benefactor.

St. Nicholas, in a similar secret manner furnished the dowries for the other two daughters who soon

Saint Nicholas of Myra

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St. Nicholas gives gold to the father of three maidens became happily married.

St. Nicholas wanted to remain as an unknown benefactor. However, the news of this charitable deed for the three maidens spread like wildfire. Soon there wasn't in this town a poor individual, or a deserted, forgotten one, or a person deeply in debt whom this holy servant of God did not help. And so in the hands of the Heavenly Father, St. Nicholas placed all his wealth, distributing it among the poor and needy, and God exalted and rewarded him by giving him the power to perform miracles.

Selection of Saint Nicholas as Archbishop of Myra

The selection of Saint Nicholas to the Archbishopric of Myra had a miracle touch. After the death of Archbishop John, a conclave of all the bishops of that area was called for the purpose of choosing Archbishop John's successor.

The assembled bishops prayed fervently to God, beseeching Him to designate the most worthy individual for that honor. Despite their fervent prayers, they were unable to choose a successor to Archbishop John immediately. The stalemate did not last too long. According to tradition which seemed to have a miracle touch to it, the oldest bishop had a

dream—a vision—in which he heard God commanding him to stand at the church entrance the following night, and the first one to enter for the early morning prayer was to be chosen as the successor, and the name of the priest first entering the cathedral was Nicholas.

And so the miracle unfolded according to the vision of the oldest bishop at the conclave. The first one to come to church that morning was Saint Nicholas and he was unanimously chosen as the Archbishop of Myra. Nicholas, in all his humility, joined by his great faith in the Lord, could not and did not refuse this call to greater service in the Vineyard of Christ, and accepted joyfully and readily because, according to tradition, Nicholas also had a vision the night before. In the vision appeared Christ the Savior with His Blessed Virgin Mother, with Jesus presenting Nicholas with a Gospel and Mary giving him the omophorium.

During our lifetime this writer has seen in our churches and in many of our earlier homes the artistic icon depicting St. Nicholas receiving the Gospel from Jesus and the omophorium from the Virgin Mary.

The faithful enthusiastically greeted their new



The Archiepiscopal ordination of St. Nicholas

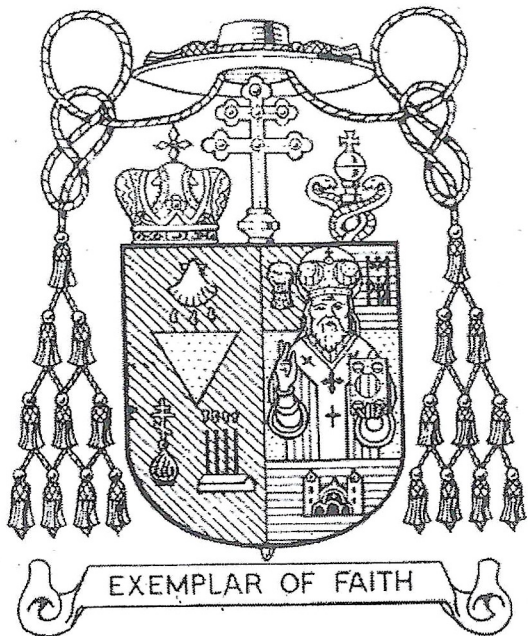
Saint Nicholas of Myra

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archbishop who was a great supporter of the poor and needy and a protector of the innocent, especially those who were unjustly condemned, in many cases saving their lives.

Metropolitan Archbishop Stephen Kocisko



had St. Nicholas Icon in his Coat of Arms

To dominate the center of his coat of arms, the late Most Reverend Stephen J. Kocisko, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh had the icon of Saint Nicholas.

The Archbishop chose this icon for an important reason. In fact, His Grace had that icon in the coat of arms during his entire episcopacy and archiepiscopacy. At the end of the First World War, the entire Kocisko family in Minneapolis, Minnesota had been hospitalized because of the then raging epidemic of influenza.

In the hospital the family incessantly prayed for the intercession of St. Nicholas in order that the health of each of them would be restored. Special prayers were offered in church and candles were lit in honor of the Miracle-Worker of Myra.

It was on the Feast of St. Nicholas that the family was released from the hospital with their health regained. And from that time the family consecrated itself under the patronage of Saint Nicholas.

For the motto under the coat of arms, Archbishop Kocisko chose a phrase from the troparion which is sung during the Liturgy on the Feast Day of St. Nicholas. His motto: "EXEMPLAR OF FAITH."

Saint Nicholas Returns Abducted Son to Parents

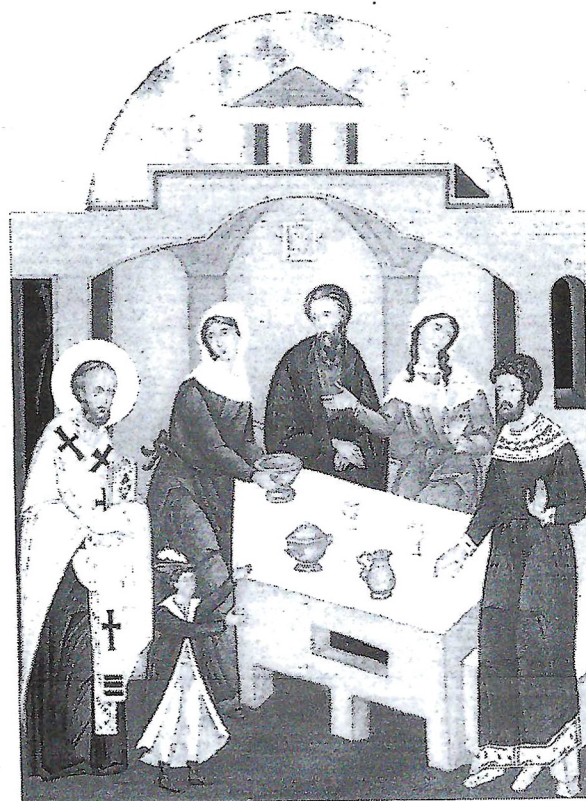
Among the many icons depicting the legends and miracles of Saint Nicholas there was found a Russian wooden one of the sixteenth century which is especially significant. It pictures Saint Nicholas returning an abducted son to his grieving parents.

According to legend, the following paragraphs describe how the Greek Catholic Union Patron Saint brought back an abducted son to his praying parents.

Sadness came to a father and mother when their son, Basil, was kidnapped by robbers from the Middle East and taken to their leader who retained him as one of his many slaves.

The following year on the Feast Day of Saint Nicholas the parents decorated the Chapel which they had built in reverence to the saintly Nicholas to whom they prayed fervently for the return of their son.

On the same day Basil remembered the legendary miracle worker and became very sad. The captors took him to the prince who asked Basil why he was sad. He soon learned that his slave was



St. Nicholas returns kidnapped boy to his parents

waiting for help from Saint Nicholas. The prince ridiculed Basil for his piety and angrily vowed that his slave would not be released from servitude.

Suddenly a storm broke loose, and the abducted son—who had been standing with a cup in his hand before the prince—was carried by the tempest to the chapel where the parents were celebrating the Saint Nicholas Feast Day.

Basil's parents joyfully expressed sincerest gratitude to God for the return of their son. And they were especially grateful to their beloved Saint Nicholas for his helpful intercession.

The Patron of Russia Saved a Storm-Tossed Ship and Revived a Dead Soldier

We have seen and read about the events—in 1991—in the Soviet Union. It appears that Russia, having now abolished Communism—is coming back to God openly.

Apparently Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S.J., saw what was coming when in 1954 he wrote in his booklet, "The Man Who Was Really Santa Claus," the following prophetic paragraphs:

Perhaps in St. Nicholas we of Western Christendom may have an unexpected ally. It is rumored that Christmas has reawakened in the Soviet Union. The Godless have not been able to make people forget the little Son of God. The old customs are being revived. Christmas, which conquered so much of the world, may be the opening wedge for the return of Christ to Russia.

"And there St. Nicholas can play a part. For once on a time, St. Nicholas was, with Our Lady and St. Andrew, the great national patron of the Russians. No merchant ship sailed from Russian harbors without his icon on its quarter-deck, a light burning before it.

"St. Nicholas may help us lead Russia back to Christ and Christmas in its fullest, most joyous meaning."

It looks like Father Lord's prophetic words are becoming a reality.

And the same feeling about Russia was expressed by Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen in his homily at the annual pilgrimage in Uniontown, Pennsylvania about 35 years ago. This writer recalls Archbishop Sheen's story about the Russian Orthodox "batushka" (priest) who was asked by the commissar to say a few words at a communist rally. The commissar perhaps thought the priest would refuse his request. The priest did come to the podium and said only two Russian words, but they were

electrifying: "**Christos Voskrese!**" "**Christ is Risen!**" Since these words were spoken during the Easter Season, he received a thunderous response of "**Voistinu Voskrese!**" "**Indeed He Is Risen!**"

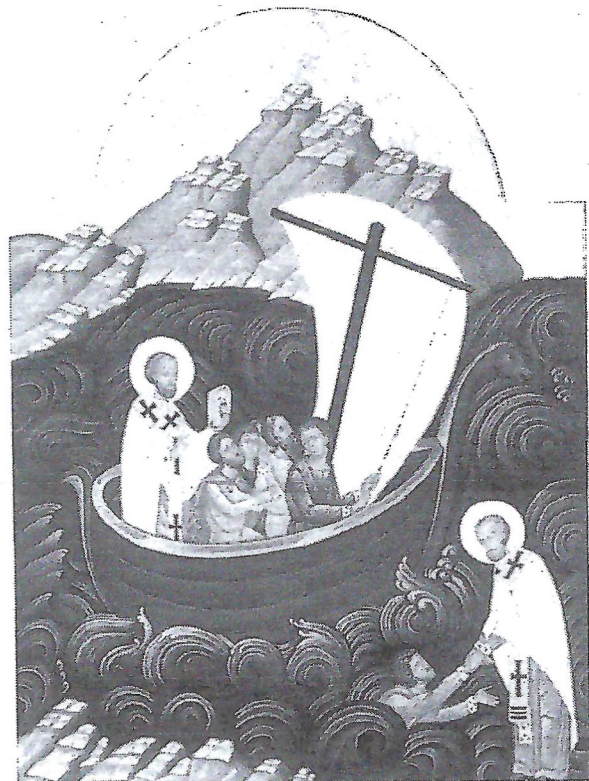
Archbishop Sheen emphasized that the enthusiastic response of the multitude showed that the Russians still held to the faith of their fathers.

St. Nicholas in the past led and protected the Russian sailors and travellers, and we hope and pray that he is leading the Russians in 1991 back to God.

CALMING THE SEA AND SAVING THE SHIP

How did St. Nicholas become the patron of sailors and travellers?

The origin of this patron's role can be found in the legend of Saint Nicholas calming a turbulent sea



St. Nicholas saves the storm-tossed sailors

and saving the storm-tossed ship from sinking. There are a few versions of this legend. The writer, however, prefers the following legend which appeared in the December 1960 pamphlet "ORTHODOX LIFE," published by the Holy Trinity Monastery of Jordanville, New York.

According to this version, the young priest Nicholas and some pilgrims departed from Patara on a sea journey to JERUSALEM. The day was clear and beautiful as they began this pilgrimage to the

Saint Nicholas of Myra

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Holy Land.

Shortly after departure Saint Nicholas had a revelation that the beautiful weather would soon become stormy and violent, and it would be dangerous to travel on the turbulent sea. He told his fellow travellers about his prophetic vision but no one believed him. The revelation became a reality when the ship approached the Island of Cyprus where it encountered a violent storm and a churning sea. The ship was tossed around like a toy and began to founder. With death staring at them, the pilgrims became desperate, and begged St. Nicholas to pray for their safety and salvation. And they prayed with him and beseeched God to save them.

It must be noted that the violent storm did not cause St. Nicholas to waver in his faith. He prayed sincerely to Him **"Whom even the winds and the sea obey."** (Matthew 8:27)

Suddenly the raging sea became calm, the violent winds stopped, the sky became clear and blue, and the sun shone brilliantly, thus bringing warmth and relief to the distraught and frightened passengers. Realizing they were saved from death, the travellers quickly expressed sincerest gratitude to God and to Saint Nicholas.

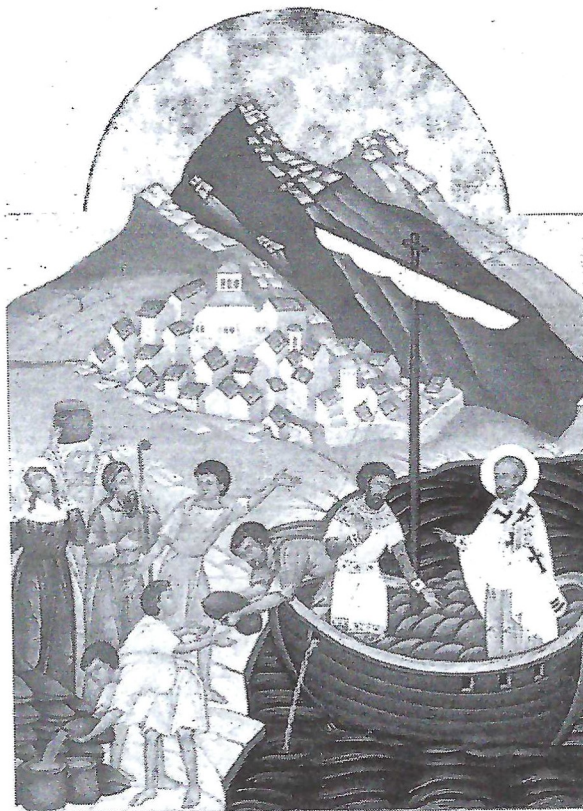
Because God almost immediately answered his prayers, St. Nicholas became—according to this legend—the patron of sailors and travellers on the sea.

One of the sailors on the ship was tossed—during the violent storm—from the masthead to the deck and was so badly injured that he was presumed to be dead. The prayers of St. Nicholas also helped to revive this sailor, to bring him back to life.

Miraculously Feeding the Hungry During the Famine in Myra

About 312 A.D., a great famine occurred in Myra. Legend and tradition maintain that it was Saint Nicholas who appeared in the dream of the buyer of corn and grain in Sicily and gave him a sufficient deposit of money and asked him to bring the shipload of corn to Myra.

Upon awakening, the buyer-captain thought it was just the usual dream, **but in his hand he held a money deposit.** The captain immediately set sail for Myra where Archbishop Nicholas bought the entire supply of corn and grain for his famished flock. A subsequent legend has it that the shipload of grain was actually destined for Emperor Constantine in Constantinople. The writer does not know how the mix-up in orders occurred. But it was miraculously solved. Saint Nicholas told the captain, **"Trust in God and do as I bid!"**



St. Nicholas obtains grain for famished residents of Myra

Daniel A. Lord in his booklet on "The Man Who Was Really Santa Claus," described this miracle in the following paragraph:

With surprising confidence, the captain stood aside. The retinue of the Bishop piled aboard and carried from the ship sack after sack of the needed grain. They took until there was enough to feed the city for two years and plant the countryside for two more harvests. And though they emptied the hold, the hold remained filled with grain. Indeed, for every sack they carried off the ship, another instantly took its place.

Yes, a miracle indeed!

A Legend which is Depicted in Two Icons

During the reign of Constantine the Great, three commanders named Nepotianus, Ursus and Erpilonus, led their army through Lycia to Phrygia to put down an uprising against the Emperor. The residents in the region near Myra rebelled against the army which had been confiscating their possessions, and this would have led to great bloodshed had it not been for Saint Nicholas who had arrived and pacified all concerned, and then invited

Saint Nicholas of Myra

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St. Nicholas saves 3 innocent generals from death

the generals to visit him in Myra.

They had scarcely arrived in the latter town, when St. Nicholas was informed that the elder of Myra, Eustatius, bribed by wicked men, had condemned three innocent persons to death, and the trio was already being led to the place of execution. St. Nicholas hurried to the scene, arriving there at the moment when the executioner was lifting the sharp knife above the head of the first of the trio who were condemned to death. Because of the respect and esteem for his religious dignity, St. Nicholas saved them from death-and soon their innocence was revealed, and the elder confessed his sin.

The commanders witnessed this, without knowing that in the very near future St. Nicholas would also save their lives. When they returned to Constantinople, charges were brought before the emperor against them, stating that they were planning to assassinate him. The emperor, believing the falsifiers, ordered the trio to be imprisoned, and condemned the commanders to death. In their distress, all three-Nepotianus, Ursus and Erpilionus,- began to pray, asking God through the merits of St. Nicholas to reveal their innocence.

The same night, St. Nicholas appeared in a dream to the emperor and told him that he, Nicholas,



St. Nicholas appears to Emperor Constantine in a dream

Archbishop of Myra-Lycia, orders the emperor to free the three innocent commanders. The same night St. Nicholas also appeared to the chief advisor of the emperor, Aulalius, who was bribed by wicked persons to bring false charges against the commanders. In the morning the emperor was somewhat astounded to hear that Aulalius had the same dream as he did. He himself started an investigation concerning the charges against the commanders, and when their innocence was determined, he had them released. He then summoned them and presented each with a reward. When they told him about St. Nicholas and what they had seen in Myra, the emperor sent them to St. Nicholas to thank him for their freedom. He also asked them to present his gifts to the servant of God, a priceless Gospel and other gifts to decorate the churches in Myra.

The Death of Saint Nicholas and the American Miracle

It was on December 6, 342 according to the Slavonic Book of Saints-that the slightly ill Saint Nicholas in his late sixties, spent his last day on earth. Having received the Sacrament of Anointing, he blessed those at his bedside, sang a few psalms and then looked heavenward as he spoke: "Lord, into

Your Hands I give my spirit."

Thus ended the life of a truly great saint, the embodiment of charity. Rev. Daniel Lord beautifully characterized Saint Nicholas in the following words: **"He set so bright an example of kindness and generosity that his own times loved him and the future could never forget him."**

It must be noted that the feast days (Holy Days) of Saints are designated, with a few exceptions, by the time of their death and entrance into Heaven.

A few days after Saint Nicholas' death, bishops, priests and monks celebrated the Divine Funeral Liturgy in the presence of a huge throng of faithful and his body was laid to rest with full honors in the Cathedral of Myra where it reposed for seven centuries until 1087 when the barbaric Saracens invaded Myra and almost destroyed it, forcing the inhabitants to go to another province. The relics of Saint Nicholas were not sacrilegiously destroyed. They were left under the cover of the cathedral which was ruined and ravaged.

There is a legend which states that in 1087 St. Nicholas appeared in a vision to a sleeping pious priest in Bari, Italy and said to him: **"Go and tell people and the whole church council to go to Myra, a town of Lycia, and take my relics from there, and bring them here, and place them in this town of Bari as I cannot stay any longer in a vacant place. This is the will of God."**

Finally the remains of St. Nicholas were brought in a solemn and triumphant procession in Bari on May 9, 1087 and were reverently placed in the Church of St. John, now called the Basilica of Saint Nicholas.

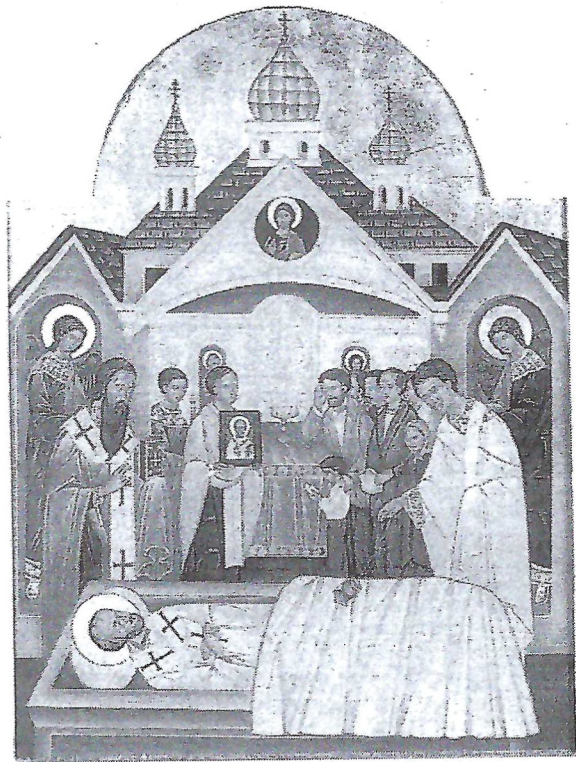
It must be noted that the faithful of the Archeparchy and Eparchies of the Ruthenian Province have made pilgrimages in recent years to Bari.

And now let us go back 85 years from the present period to Jacob's Creek, Pennsylvania in 1907.

**It Happened in America--Many Lives
Saved on St. Nicholas Day in 1907**

The lives of many Greek Catholic Union members, living in Van Meter and Jacobs Creek, Pennsylvania, were spared because they attended religious services on the Feast Day of Saint Nicholas, instead of going to work.

They were employed by the Darr mines and were requested to work on December 19, 1907 (when the Feast of St. Nicholas was celebrated according to the Julian Calendar). And despite the fact that work had been slack, they refused and attended the Liturgy



The funeral of St. Nicholas and the sparing of the miners

that day instead.

That very day a huge mine explosion occurred, snuffing out the lives of approximately 200 men. Spared were the Greek Catholic Union members and others who decided instead to attend the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Saint Nicholas.

Saved by Religion

(The following account appeared in the area newspaper.)

Jacobs Creek, Pa, December 19--Religious fervor is due to sweep through the Youghiogheny Valley as never before as a consequence of the Darr disaster. Today was a holiday of the Greek Catholic Church, and as such it was observed by many of the men who usually work in the Darr mines. Usually about 400 men toil within the mine. On account of the religious holiday - it was the Feast of St. Nicholas - this number was nearly cut in half, and these, almost two hundred men, who were saved by religious devotion, will certainly be more devout than ever, after the extent of the mine's horror is fully realized.

In the Greek Catholic Union St. Nicholas Chapel there is a beautiful icon, representing the Death of Saint Nicholas. The iconographers, having fittingly placed some miners in this icon in memory of the hundreds of Greek Catholic Union members whose lives were spared on that historic day when a terrific mine explosion occurred.

The above icon is one of ten in the Saint Nicholas Chapel depicting the life and legends of the Patron Saint of the Greek Catholic Union.

Saint Nicholas has indeed helped our Greek Catholic Union, our Church and our people in the past and present. May He continue interceding for all of us in the future.

Although Not Recorded

St. Nicholas was at Nicean Council

Saint Nicholas was not only a miracle-worker, a generous and charitable individual who especially helped the poor, but he also was an "exemplar of the True Faith" which he so clearly demonstrated at the Nicean Council, and yet his attendance is not recorded. This strange fact has puzzled me for a long time, and I have finally discovered why he is not listed among the Holy Fathers of that council.

The Council of Nicea was summoned by Emperor Constantine in 325 A.D. to settle some very serious problems in the religion to which he was converted and to which he gave freedom of worship. The Church had to face its dreaded enemy, Arianism. Rev. Daniel Lord, S.J. described Arianism as being **"the denial of the divinity of Christ."** The vociferous promoter of this denial was Arius, a parish priest in the Egyptian Diocese of Bishop Alexander who stated, as related by Eric Crozier in his book, **"The Life and Legends of Saint Nicholas,"** that **"the true belief of the Church was, always had been, and always would be, that the Holy Trinity was indivisibly One, and that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost were inseparable and of one substance."**

The clever Arius disputed the Bishop's statement by affirming, as Crozier writes, **"that because God the Son was begotten of God the Father, Son and Father could not therefore be said to be strictly of one substance."** Being a brilliant speaker, Arius was able to convince a number of priests, thus creating a controversy which almost tore the early Christian Church apart.

As we all know this council adopted the Nicene Creed, the fundamental and true belief of the Catholic Church of various rites. It was during the debate on

the Creed that Arius vehemently protested against the insertion of the phrase **"of one substance"** in the creed.

Saint Nicholas, "the exemplar of the True Faith" could not stand the raging Arius.

"It must be noted here that the Council of Nicea, not only included the Emperor and the bishops, but also parish priests. That's how Arius had become a member of this august assembly and had the opportunity to spout his venomous heresy.

The patient, kind and understanding Saint Nicholas sincerely felt that Arius should not be allowed to bring shame to this great assembly by his ridiculing the True Faith. Eric Crozier describes what St. Nicholas finally did in the following words:

"Arius was standing on his chair, swaying backwards and forwards, and beating time to his ridiculous chorus, when Nicholas suddenly rose from his seat, crossed the great hall, and gave him a resounding box on the ear."

Saint Nicholas left the hall with deep sorrow for his outburst and was ready to give up his episcopacy. Emperor Constantine called Saint Nicholas back to the assembly hall and asked him to apologize to Arius for striking him. Crozier describes the attempt at apology in the following words: "In the presence of the assembled churchmen, he (Nicholas) knelt humbly on the ground before Arius with tears of repentance streaking down his face to confess his shame and to ask for pardon."

Unfortunately, Arius did not forgive Saint Nicholas. Instead, he and his followers wanted St. Nicholas to be banished. However, the desire was not fulfilled.

Emperor Constantine and the council became disgusted with the obdurate, stubborn and ungenerous Arius, and by general consent the Emperor banished Arius and his followers from all future meetings and had them escorted by guards out of the assembly hall.

But Saint Nicholas was asked by the council to resume his place among them.

Before announcing whether Saint Nicholas returned to participate in the council again, it must be noted that the Nicene Creed and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity being inseparably one were approved by the council.

And now, as Paul Harvey would say **"For the rest of the story:"**

Our Saint Nicholas felt he should not be released so lightly for his slapping Arius, and begged the council to accept his penitent plea and to punish him

Saint Nicholas of Myra

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before he would take his seat.

Eric Crozier has written the following description of what happened after Saint Nicholas asked to be punished: "The Emperor suggested that Nicholas should name his own punishment, but warned him that they would not hear of him withdrawing from the council, for it was his duty to punish himself and not them. Nicholas humbly accepted this command, and asked that the council should remove his name from all formal records of the assembly and should permit him to withhold his signature from their great decisions as an enduring mark of his disgrace. It is for this reason that the Decrees and Acts of the Council of Nicea do not include Nicholas's name among his brother bishops, and that, although all paintings of the council show him boxing Arius on the ear, officially it is as if he never attended that great gathering of bishops."

Despite his righteous anger for which he was sincerely penitent, Saint Nicholas was indeed the "Exemplar of the True Faith" and all of us should follow in his footsteps.

Our Patron Saint Nicholas

These melodious words in honor of our Patron, St. Nicholas, should thrill every Carpatho Rusin Greek Catholic's heart on St. Nicholas Day (December 6).

The Irish have their St. Patrick; the Serbs, their St. Sava; the Magyars (Hungarians) their St. Stephen, and we Carpatho Rusins have Our St. Nicholas. Like our Greek Catholic Union, many of our churches, our clubs, our institutions have as their patron St. Nicholas. Nicholas is as common a Carpatho Rusin name as Patrick is a common Irish name, or Stephen, a common Hungarian name.

How St. Nicholas Chooses the Most Worthy for Gifts

In our research we found a story describing how St. Nicholas selected the most worthy to receive his gifts.

The story, which is worth remembering, goes like this.

Good Saint Nicholas came upon ingratitude when he left gifts for people. So the next Christmas he decided to test the good will and gratitude of those

whom he wished to honor with his presents.

After distributing gifts to those he knew to be deserving, he packed the rest of the presents in a large sack. And what a big pack it was! It contained money, food, toys for the little ones, warm clothes for those who needed them, and comforts for the aged.

St. Nicholas then picked up the sack and went out beside the road to a little village. He put down his sack and sat by it in the snow.

To each passerby he cried aloud: "Friend, will you please help an old man carry his heavy sack?"

But most of those who went by were too busy with their own affairs to heed him. For that matter, they just kept going, burdened with their Christmas things and few deigned to answer St. Nick's appeal.

However, St. Nicholas was not dismayed. As the people passed him, he continued to cry out: "Friend, please help an old man to carry his heavy sack.

A fat, rich merchant came by and answered: "Ah, old man, instead of sitting there at ease, you should carry your own burden."

Then came another person with a goose tucked under his arm and he spoke roguishly: "Ah, and while I bend over to lift your sack, it would be easy for you to snatch my goose and run away with it. No, thank you."

And so it went on, until a poor fagot (bundle of branches) cutter burdened with his bundle of sticks, wearily dragged along towards St. Nicholas, who pleaded: "Friend, will you help an old man to carry his heavy sack?"

"Yes, I will, dear neighbor," replied the cutter, loading the heavy sack on his own bundle. "Where do you want it taken?"

"Lead on," said St. Nicholas, and when we reach the place I will tell you and give you my blessing."

So the poor old man plodded forward with the saint beside him, until they reached a tumbled down cottage on the edge of the village.

"Here I live," smiled the man, "but after I leave my faggots I will carry your sack to your journey's end with a good heart, for it is Christmas, when all men should help their fellowmen."

"My journey ends here," said St. Nicholas, "the

Saint Nicholas—The Guardian of the Greek Catholic Union

(Originally written in the Rusin Language
by Rev. Andrew Koman)

Moich spivov predmet duchovno-cerkovnyj,
Ne iz fantazij, iz basnej sobranyj;
Čto mñi k serdcu blisko, v duši majet koreñ,
V čem ja prebyvaju, čim t'išus' každyj deñ,
Sčiro izlivaju--virnyj hrudi plameñ.

Uhodniki Božiji, veliki heroji,
Bohobojna ich žizñ vedet mysli moji;
Oni naučajut, čto jest' najcinñijše;
Bohu uhoždati, žiti čim svjat'ijše.

Posmotrim že obraz Otca Nikolaja,
Vsim obsčeizvistna Jeho žizñ svjataja;
Otryvki pripomñu v ritmach Podkarpatskich
Čej i blahosklonnost' najdu v dušach Russkich.

Bohu uhoždal on vsehda molitvami,
O bidnych staralsja vsimi sposobami;
Padajusčich duchom, obodrdjal, pot'išal,
Otcam, d'it'jam v nuždach, skoru pomošč daval.

Ot hrichov ott'ihal najpače d'ivicy,
Koho moh, izbavl'al ot strašnoj l'ivicy;
Čudotvorca vsehda l'udi okružali,
Jak sosčnyj cvit pčoly okružajut v jari.

Veliki zasluhi majet on pred Bohom,
Jeho imña slavne pred každyj Rusinom;
Ne lem na Vostoku, v l'isistych Beskidach
L'ubov' kipit k nemu i tu v našich serdcach.

Russka naša kripost', Sojedenenije,
Pod jeho patronstvom cvitet do seho dne;
I budet tuhnuti, širitisja dal'šc;
Svjatyj dobry serdca do sebe privjaže.

Tebi posvjačaju vsi serdečny čuvstva,
Otče Nikolaje, chrañ Rusinov ot zla!
Sobiraj ich v kupu, hde vijet prapor Tvoj,
Hde propadat sila vsjakoj kozni zlobnoj.

sack and what's in it are for you, my son, because
you well deserve the gift."

My poetry is based on the spiritual
It's no fable, fantasy but is actual.
It comes from my heart and has roots deep in my
soul,
As I describe life enjoying my daily role,
Humbly placing my enthusiasm on a scroll.

God's saintly individuals are great heroes,
And their very holy lives for my thoughts do pose.
For all of us they show the most important way,
To serve God by living religiously each day.

At the icon of Saint Nicholas let us look- His life of
holiness is known in every nook.
And about I cite some excerpts in Rusin,
Approval of ev'ry Russian hoping to win.

God was pleased with him because he always did
pray,
And the poor he helped in ev'ry possible way
The fallen in spirit he cheered and comforted
To the poor fathers and children with aid he sped.

He especially snared maidens from paths of Sin,
He saved as many as he could from Satan's bin
People always surrounded the Wonder-Worker,
Just like bees seeking from flower pure nectar.

From the Lord he earned many merits without din,
His name is well-known by ev'ry Rusin.
Not only in the East, nor in Beskid mountains,
But here, too, many show him love and reverence.

Our Rusin fortress-the Greek Catholic Union-
Continues to progress under his protection
And it will prosper, spread ev'rywhere, growing
strong,
For the Saint will draw those of good will to his
throng.

Saint Nicholas, to you these thoughts I dedicate,
They come from my heart: please save the Rusins
from hate
Unite us into one throng, under your banner,
Joined in a crusade to smash evil ev'rywhere.