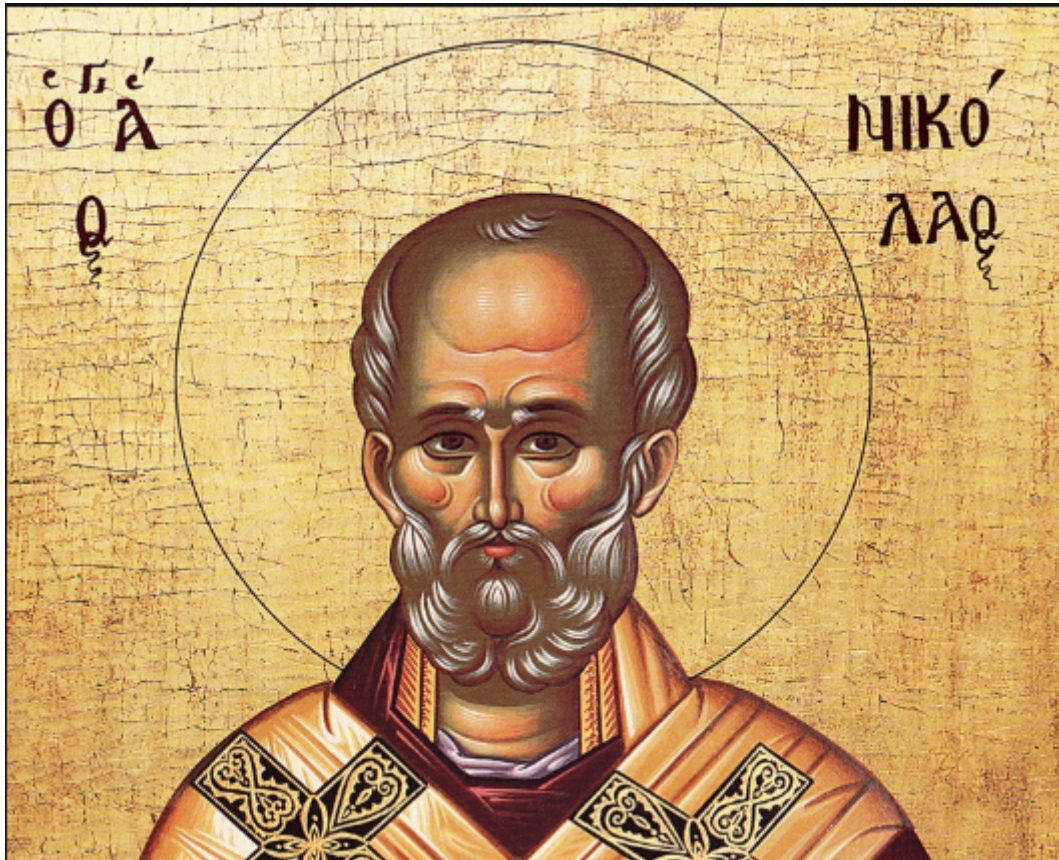


Archiepiscopal Encyclical for the Feast of St. Nicholas



December 6, 2019

Feast of our Father among the Saints,
Nicholas the Wonder-worker,
Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the reverend priests and deacons, the monks and nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox family in America

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

The name of Saint Nicholas brings joy to people around the world as nearly a synonym for love and generosity. Even more does his name evoke reverence and delight among Orthodox Christians, who know the wondrous deeds God worked

through His servant. By the power of Christ within, Saint Nicholas fought injustice, raised the dead, healed the sick, and supplied the needs of the flock under his care. In these wonders we rejoice.

In connection with the National Shrine at the World Trade Center, however, the mention of Saint Nicholas has come to evoke the opposite feelings. A name that should be associated with holiness, peace, and prayer is instead linked with debt, corruption, and mismanagement. Angry voices have been raised against clergy and laity alike, without regard for involvement or responsibility. Some think that the priests and bishops are obliged to find money to complete the Shrine. The clergy, however, are not trained to be fundraisers or bankers. Their attention should be prayer and the ministry of God's word (Acts 6:4).

The time has come to seek more actively the assistance of the Shrine's holy patron. Perhaps what we have failed to do on earth, he can help to accomplish from heaven. Christ has given Saint Nicholas the power to right wrongs and provide for the needs, whether spiritual, medical, or financial. By his intercessions he raised a fallen sailor from the dead; surely through his prayers the work on our Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine can be resurrected once more and brought to completion.

I would ask, therefore, that in every parish of our Archdiocese, a Service of Paraklesis to Saint Nicholas be offered in connection with his feast. Let us seek the help of the Wonder-worker of Myra, asking for him to show us God's power and provide that which we lack, until the church bearing his holy name stands once more at the World Trade Center.

With one heart and one voice may we chant on his feastday:

Winged like a young bird flying forth from the nest of the angels to hover over the blossoms of the Church, thrice-blessed Nicholas, you call out to God always on behalf of all in any kind of necessity, peril, or temptation; and by your intercessions rescue them and us.

(1st Sticheron of the Lauds of December 6)

May the name of Saint Nicholas once again be known only for love, generosity, and the glory of God forevermore. May the Lord grant many years to those who celebrate their name day with this bright festival, as well as to us all.

With paternal love in Christ,

† Ἀμερικῆς Ἐπισκοπὸς

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America