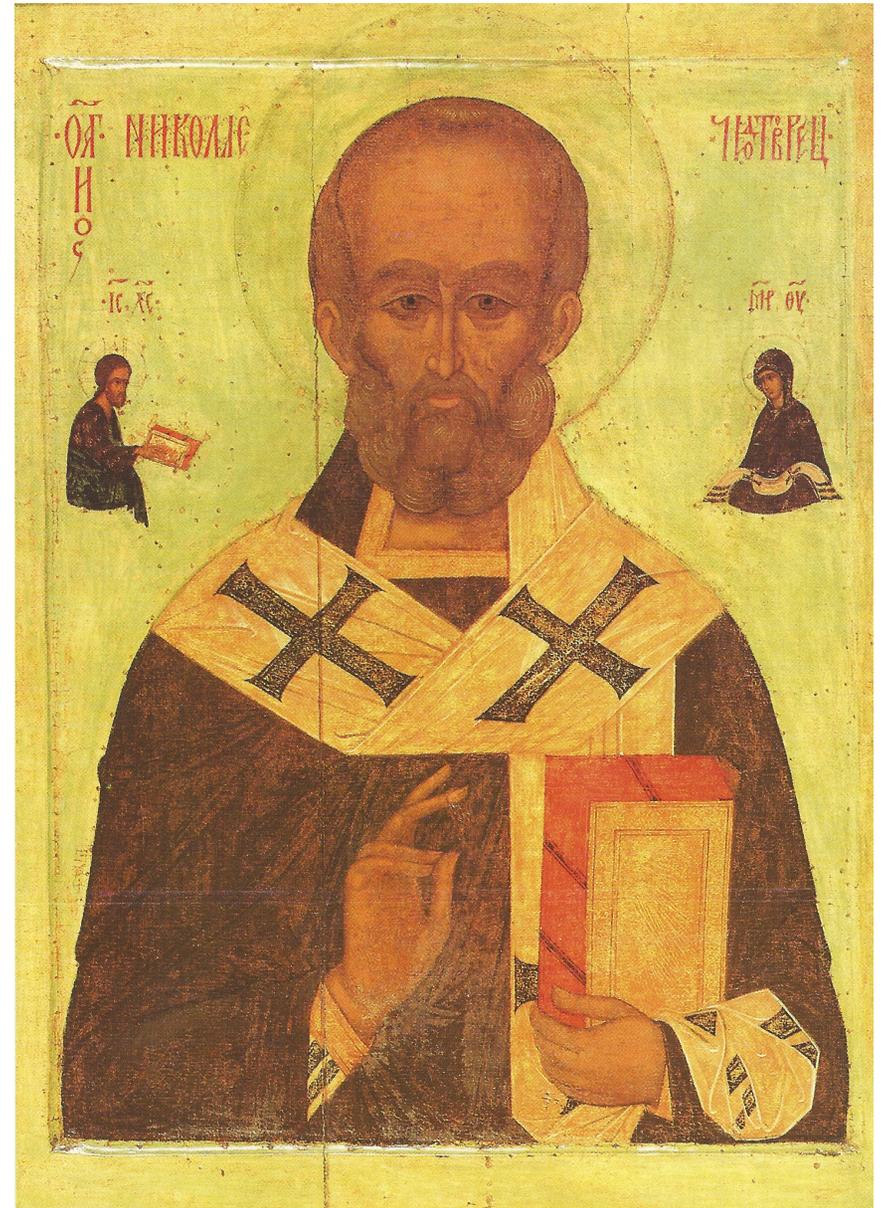


THINK ABOUT IT ... choose the correct answer:

1. St. Nicholas was Archbishop of Myra in Lycia. Where in the world is Lycia?
 - A. the North Pole
 - B. Africa
 - C. Asia Minor
2. St. Nicholas' uncle, the Bishop of Patara, was named:
 - A. Theophanes
 - B. Nicholas
 - C. Nonna
3. St. Nicholas gave charity:
 - A. in secret
 - B. to anyone who asked
 - C. both "A" and "B"
4. Because of the many miracles that he brought about or that happened when people asked for his help, St. Nicholas is called:
 - A. a sailor
 - B. a wonderworker
 - C. a shipbuilder
5. When we ask a saint to pray to God for us, the Church calls this asking for the saint's:
 - A. intercession
 - B. forgiveness
 - C. respect
6. St. Nicholas is venerated as a protector of:
 - A. travelers
 - B. sailors
 - C. both "A" and "B"
7. The "incorrupt" body of a saint is called:
 - A. tomb
 - B. relics
 - C. cadillo

Saint Nicholas of Myra



St. Nicholas pray unto God for us!

Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker

Is Saint Nicholas “Santa Claus”?

Yes, and no. “Santa” does mean “Saint” and “Claus” is an abbreviation for the name “Nicholas.”

The modern description of St. Nicholas as Santa Claus comes from a poem for children by Clement Moore, “A Visit from St. Nicholas.”

Santa Claus is the same as Saint Nicholas in his generosity and his love for children. But Santa’s home at the North Pole is far away from Lycia in Asia Minor where St. Nicholas was born. The description of Santa Claus’ clothing, his flying sleigh and reindeer are the fairy tale part of the poem.

The part that is true is that St. Nicholas **loved people** and helped them by giving gifts in secret. The poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas” was written to illustrate St. Nicholas’ **spirit of giving**.

St. Nicholas was Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, in southern Asia Minor. He was born in the city of Patara to a childless couple named Theophanes and Nonna. His uncle, who was also named Nicholas, was the Bishop of Patara. He noticed that when people asked the child Nicholas questions about the faith, he answered like an **Elder** (an older person who is usually a monk). So his uncle, the Bishop, ordained him a Reader. Later he was ordained a Priest.

St. Nicholas helped anyone who asked. He always gave secretly because he knew that **every good thing is actually a gift from God**.

In Patara there was a man who was once rich but who became very poor. The man had three daughters. One was old enough to get married, but he could not afford a wedding. He could not even afford food.

St. Nicholas rode his horse by the man’s house one night, and **secretly** threw a sack of gold through the window. Tradition says that the money landed in one of the daughter’s empty shoes, or a sock. With the money the man had a wedding for his daughter. St. Nicholas also gave them money for food, saving the family.

This story is the basis for the tradition of hanging stockings or leaving an empty shoe for St. Nicholas to fill with goodies.

St. Nicholas is venerated as a **protector of travelers** and **sailors**. One time, he decided to go on a pilgrimage by ship to the Jerusalem, but he had a vision of the devil sinking the ship. When the terrible storm arose, St. Nicholas calmed the waves by his prayers.

When Nicholas came back to Patara, he entered a monastery and lived as a monk.

Then the old archbishop of Myra died. Usually archbishops are chosen by other bishops who vote at a meeting that is called a Council. However, an angel came to an elder bishop and told him that the first one who came to the church that night should be made archbishop, and that he would be named Nicholas. The bishop went to the church to wait. Nicholas was the first to arrive. “What is your name, child?” the bishop asked. Nicholas replied, “My name is Nicholas, Master, and I am your servant.”

Archbishop Nicholas was well known for his **kindness** and **love for people**. Through his prayers, the city of Myra was saved from a terrible famine. He saved many people from drowning, and he obtained release for innocent persons who had been unjustly thrown in prison or taken captive during wars.

One time, a pagan emperor put him in prison together with other Christians for refusing to worship idols. In prison he **helped others** and prayed that God would give them courage. Many of them were killed, becoming martyrs. God preserved St. Nicholas unharmed. When St. Constantine became the new Emperor, St. Nicholas was restored as Archbishop.

After his death, St. Nicholas’ relics (his body) “was preserved incorrupt.” That is the Church’s way of saying that his body did not decay. It is a sign that someone was a saint. Instead, myrrh (a sweet smelling oil) flowed from his relics, and many persons were cured of sickness by it.

St. Nicholas is known throughout the world. Many famous cathedrals, monasteries and churches were consecrated in his name in Russia, Greece, Serbia, the United States, and other countries.

Many **miracles** have occurred when people have prayed before his icon and asked St. Nicholas to intercede (pray to God for them) during times of war, sickness, and personal difficulties. The Church calls such saints and their icons “**wonderworking**.”