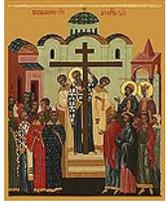


✠Bulletin✠

Week of December 7th to December 13th



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

V. Rev. Fr. Leonid Palceski
2365 South Olga Drive
Fort Myers, Florida 33905

www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Phone: 239-265-6562

Cell: 239-699-3119

HolyCrossFtMyers@gmail.com

26th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 1 Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (397). Ven. Anthony, Abbot of Siya (Novgorod—1558). Ven. Nilus of Stolobénsk (1554). Ven. John the Faster, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—12th c.). Martyr Athenodorus of Mesopotamia (ca. 304). Ven. Paul the Obedient. St. Philotheia of Thrace, Protectress of Romania (12th c.). Ven. Gregory, Founder of Grigoriou Monastery (Mt. Athos—14th c.).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday December 7th

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Saturday December 12th

4:30 pm – Great Vespers

Weekly Schedule

Sunday December 7th

- Choir Practice
- Inquirers & Catechism classes following Liturgy

Homily on the Feast of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker By Archbishop Averky of Syracuse

Today we celebrate the memory of one of the greatest saints of the Church of Christ, our holy father Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra the Wonderworker, who as no one else has been revered at all times by all peoples of the world, not only Christians, but even Muslims and pagans.

“I see, brethren, a new sun rising above the earth and bringing sweet consolation to the sorrowful and suffering,” said the Bishop of Patara as he ordained Nicholas to the priesthood. “Joyous is the flock which will be under his ministry; he will strengthen them in faith in the Lord, he will guide them in goodness and piety, he will be an earnest helper to all those in need.”

St Nicholas’ entire life was a brilliant fulfillment of these prophetic words of the visionary bishop. St Nicholas burned with a passionate faith in God since his youth, being a strict, unbending zealot for the purity of Orthodox Christianity; he was a severe ascetic, in constant vigil, fasting and prayer; forgetting himself, he generously helped the needy, consoled the suffering, defended the innocently condemned; strengthening and guiding those who faltered in the faith; he never tired of performing all sorts of Christian acts of love and mercy to others.

His was in the full sense of the term “a canon of faith,” and “an icon of meekness,” as the Holy Church calls him, and so there is no other righteous saint of God who has been so revered by the people, so lauded and magnified. His sanctity even during his life and after his blessed repose was attested to by a multitude of miracles. There is no other saint who provided such a “sea of miracles” as St Nicholas.

Not only Christians venerate him, even Muslims and pagans, who see in him a great wonderworker and speedy intercessor for those who are in a crisis. Those who lived on the shores of the Black Sea probably often saw the icon of St. Nicholas on a Turkish felucca (vessel), for the Turkish Muslims had great faith that St Nicholas helps sailors caught in a storm. One can see an image of St Nicholas in the primitive huts of pagans who called him the “kind old man,” and believed in his miraculous aid during times of sickness and sorrows, when mere mortals cannot help.

Our seafaring vessels, and those of our brothers in the faith, always had an icon of St. Nicholas, renowned as the protector of sailors.

There is a remarkable icon of St. Nicholas in Kiev, known as the "Wet Nicholas." At the end of the 11th century, a boat carrying a wealthy Kievan, his wife and infant son sped down the Dnieper River to arrive in time for the church feast day celebrations of Saints Boris and Gleb. The mother fell asleep and dropped the child into the water, where he disappeared. The parents immediately began praying to St. Nicholas, and when they arrived at Saints Boris and Gleb Church, they found their wet son lying on the floor beneath an icon of St. Nicholas. One can only imagine the indescribable joy the parents felt. Since then, this icon of St. Nicholas is located at a chapel in Kiev's Saint Sophia Cathedral, known as the "Wet Nicholas."

A great number of churches and monasteries were dedicated to the righteous man of Christ, Nicholas, and many, many icons painted of him which became known to be miraculous. The name Nicholas became one of the favorites.

Alas! in recent times St. Nicholas has not been given the proper veneration in the West, which we first noticed in Western Europe, and then here in America: his glorious persona has been turned into Santa Claus, a source of unworthy amusement. On the night before the holiday, they arrange his so-called "Merry Nicholas evenings" with dances and blasphemous amusements, presenting the glorious saint in some ridiculous form next to the spirit of evil [trans. commonly known as Krampus], placed in the windows of shops, in newspapers and magazines, images and advertisements, demeaning the religious sensibilities of the faithful who honor his memory; his name is used in inappropriate jokes, and children are taught to identify the great man of God with the image of a fat, rosy-cheeked old man with a beard, holding a bell and luring people into gift shops.

What a disgrace! What a shame for contemporary mankind, that while boasting of its "cultural achievements," cannot honor such giants of the spirit which dwarf today's silly ways - such was St. Nicholas, everything great and holy has been turned into a mockery. We Orthodox Christians preserve a completely different attitude towards this holy man of Christ, if only we reject the West's view of him. This Christmas holiday is no time for silly pranks, debauchery and amusement, if only because St. Nicholas' memory lies within our hearts from our childhood as being foreign to all such nonsense. His holy name, a bright beacon of Christian virtue, reminds us of what should inspire us: pious and trembling veneration of his holy life and Christian deeds.

St. Nicholas teaches us more in our godless times: not to be aloof and disinterested when the impious and godless blaspheme against the holy faith and Church, mock the holy name of Christ and degrade all that is holy. St. Nicholas, attending the First Ecumenical Synod, could not bear the heresy of Arius, who degraded the Divine duality of the Son of God, and in a fit of righteous indignation struck him in the face. This upset many of the participants of the Synod, and they intended on defrocking St. Nicholas. But that night, some of them were enlightened by a vision: the Lord Jesus Christ appeared handing him the Holy Gospel as the Mother of God put a bishop's omophorion on his shoulders. They understood that the archpastor's actions were not borne of malice, unworthy of a servant of God, but a result of his fervent zeal and love for Christ the Savior, Who was being disdained by the impious Arius, and they recognized his justice, while Arius was condemned as a heretic.

This fact is deplored by liberal scholars of our time, who preach some sort of post-Christian "ecumenical love" for all heretics and apostates, and they even argue against the fact of St. Nicholas' very participation in the First Ecumenical Synod, but the Holy Church deems this as a fact and has expressed it in prayer texts and iconography.

Everyone today complains of how difficult life is, about the moral and material crisis, but they take no measures to change the lot of mankind.

What are we to do?

There is only one path - to emulate this great pleaser of God, Bishop Nicholas, not only in our personal lives but in public and civic life as well.

Less noisome but often hypocritical and false words about humaneness, fairness, general contentment and satisfaction, which are so common and which are so irresponsibly disseminated by activists who strive to be leaders of men, mean less than the actual true Christian love and piety in which the life of Nicholas was glorified.

If we truly want good for ourselves and for all of humanity, this great saint must serve as an example to us all.

"O Nicholas, do not cease in praying to Christ God for the faith and love of those who esteem your most joyous and glorious memory!" Amen.

Schedule of Weekly Services

Saturday December 13th

4:30 pm – Vespers

Wednesday December 24th

3:00 pm - Vespers with Litya

Feast of the Nativity of Christ (Strict Fast)

Thursday December 25th

8:50 am- Hours

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

Feast of the Nativity of Christ

Thursday January 1, 2026

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

Circumcision of Christ & St. Basil the Great

Monday January 5th

5:30 pm - Vespers

Feast of Theophany with the Great Blessing of Water (Strict Fast)

Tuesday January 6th

8:50 am – Hours

9:00 am - Divine Liturgy

Feast of Theophany

Saturday January 10th

4:30 pm - Great Vespers

Saturday January 17th

4:30 pm - Great Vespers

Friday January 30th

8:50 am – Hours

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

Synaxis of the Ecumenical Teachers and Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom.

Prayer Requests

James Clark – Parishioner of St. Herman’s

Nicholas Kowalski

Carolyn – Robert & Debra’s Forster’s daughter

Anne and Scott Peatross

Robert (John) Forster

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos’ daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,

Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,

Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,

Roman, Mykola

Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

tithe.ly.com

Another way to “donate”. This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 1 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body,
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.

The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life:

“Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ!

Glory to Thy Kingdom!//

Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!”

Tone 4 Troparion *(St. Ambrose)*

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith,
an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence;
your humility exalted you;
and your poverty enriched you.

O Hierarchy Father Ambrose,

entreat Christ our God//

that our souls may be saved!

Tone 1 Kontakion (Resurrection)

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory,
raising the world with Thyself.

Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished.

Adam exults, O Master!

Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee://

“Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

Tone 3 Kontakion (St. Ambrose)

You shone forth with divine doctrine, eclipsing the deception of Arius,
O shepherd and initiate of the mysteries, Ambrose.

You worked miracles through the power of the Spirit,
healing various passions://

righteous Father, entreat Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

Tone 6 (Steadfast Protectress...)

Steadfast Protectress of Christians,
constant Advocate before the Creator:

do not despise the cry of us sinners,

but in your goodness come speedily to help us

who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us,

O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

Tone 1 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us / as we have set our hope on Thee!

(Ps. 32:22)

V. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!

(Ps. 32:1)

Ephesians 5:9-19 (Epistle)

Brethren: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.” See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Tone 1

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. God gives vengeance unto me, and subdues people under me.

(Ps. 17:48)

V. He magnifies the salvation of the King and deals mercifully with David, His anointed, and his seed forever. (Ps. 17:51)

Luke 17:12-19 (Gospel)

Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” So when He saw them, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

Explanation of Today’s Gospel Reading Luke 17:12-19

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

12. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. From this, one may learn that nothing prevents a man from living in a manner pleasing to God, not even if he belongs to a despised race, if only he has a good will and disposition. For behold, ten lepers met Jesus as He was about to enter a certain city. They met Him outside the city, for those who were considered unclean were not permitted to go into the city. They *stood afar off*, as if ashamed of their supposed uncleanness, and did not dare to draw near, thinking that Jesus abhorred them, as did the others.

13. And they lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on

us!" *They lifted up their voices* and made supplication. By physical location they were standing afar off, but in their supplication they were near. For *the Lord is near unto all that call upon Him in truth.* (Psalms 144:18) And they did not make supplication to Him as to a mere man, but as to One greater than a man. For they called Him *Master*, meaning Lord, Protector, and Guardian, which is not far from thinking of Him as God.

14. So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. The Lord instructs them to show themselves to the priests. [Initially] the priests would examine men such as these to determine whether they were lepers or not. For there were certain signs by which the priests could recognize incurable leprosy. But in addition to this, if it were the case that someone who had been suffering from leprosy were healed, the priests would [again] examine him to verify the cure, in which event the gift commanded by the law would be offered. (Leviticus Ch 14) In this case, since these men were already confirmed lepers, why should they show themselves to the priests unless indeed they were about to be cleansed? To command them to go to the priests, indicated nothing other than that they would be healed. This is why the Evangelist says that *as they went, they were cleansed.*

15-16. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. Of the ten lepers, the nine who were Israelites showed themselves to be ungrateful, while it was the Samaritan, an accursed foreigner, as we said earlier, who returned to voice his gratitude. The Samaritans were Assyrians; therefore, let no Gentile despair, and let no one descended from holy forebears boast. This miracle also signifies the common salvation that came to the whole human race. For the ten lepers represent all of human nature, and that nature was leprous with wickedness, carrying about with it the ugliness of sin, passing its life outside the heavenly city on account of its uncleanness, and standing afar off from God. But this very distance from God is itself a supplication. For when the Lover of mankind, Who wills that all should be saved and receive good things, sees someone who is not sharing in His goodness, then He is most quick to show mercy and to heal those who are so miserably afflicted. But He also healed the whole leprous nature of man, when, for every man's sake, He took flesh and tasted of death.

17-19. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But

where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." Although the Jews had been cleansed of the uncleanness of their leprous sin, as far as it was the Lord's part to do, they showed themselves ungrateful and did not return from the path of their vain foolishness to give glory to God Who saved them, that is, to believe in Him Who is God and Who endured the extremes of suffering. For this is the glory of God: His Flesh and His Cross. These Jews, then, did not confess the incarnate and crucified Lord of glory. But the foreign and accursed people of the Gentiles recognized the One Who makes clean, and they glorified Him by believing in Him. They believed that God loves man so much and is so powerful that He accepted the very depth of dishonor for our sake - **this is His love of man** - and having accepted it, He suffered no harm to His own nature - **this is His power.**

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!