

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith

110 EAST MAIN STREET,
Marblehead, OH 43440

Rev. Fr. Peter Tomas, Rector

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***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,
Diocese of the Midwest***

DECEMBER 3, 2023

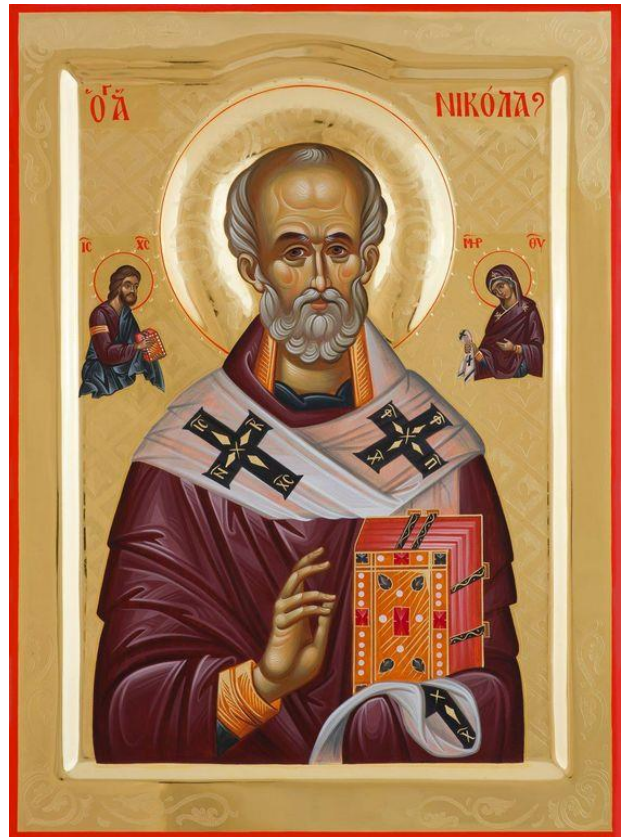
TWENTY SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: Ephesians 5:9-19

Brethren: 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.

GOSPEL: Luke 18:18-27

At that time, a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So, Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the



St. Nicholas the Wonderworker
Feast Day – December 6th

commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’” And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.” So, when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?” But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

Liturgical Schedule

MON. Dec 4	Great Martyr Barbara; Glorification of the Priestmartyr Alexander Hotovitzky
TUE. Dec 5	Venerable Savva the Sanctified
6:00 PM	VESPERS
WED. Dec 6	Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia
9:10 AM	HOURS
9:30 AM	DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Breakfast at Galley’s
THU. Dec 7	Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan
FRI. Dec 8	Venerable Patapius of Thebes
SAT. Dec 9	The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Mother of God
4:00 PM	VESPERS
SUN. Dec 10	27th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST <i>Martyrs Means, Hermogenes, and Eugraphus, of Alexandria</i>
9:10 AM	HOURS
9:30 AM	DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Hour



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Tony Monastra, 2119 Willow Cove Marblehead, OH 43440; Patti Owens, 311 Woodbridge Road, Vermilion, OH 44089; Basil Glovinsky, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; Subdeacon Roger Pinta, P.O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; Diane Tryon, 109 Joslyn Street, Arcadia, OH 44804; Ed & Irene Vangeloff, 454 Strouse Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870



DECEMBER CANDLE SPONSORS

Altar Candles: Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle, For Health and God’s Blessings of Barbara Wroblewski, Matushka’s mother and Michal Tomáš, Father’s father (**\$50**); **Chandelier:** Jean Hileman – For safe travel home for the Issler family (**\$50**); **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Jean Hileman - In loving memory of my father, William Pipenur (**\$25**); **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Ben (**\$20**); **Candles at St. Sophia Icon:** For Safety and Health of Nicholas, Tikhon, Gleice, & Chloe (**\$20**)



DECEMBER REPOSED

1- Helen Elchisco (1990); 3- Mary Hubicki (2013); 8-Mary (Marika) Lefas (2019);12- Anna Bretz (2002); 13- Joseph Mazurik (1986); 13- Archimandrite Seraphim Oblivantseff (1954) Former Pastor; 15- Michael W. Belenky (1971); 20- Julia Brosojah Millie (1953); 20- John Mazurik (2017); 20- William Pipenur (2003); 21- Mary Sennich (1985); 22- Antonima Vecsey (1972); 23- Steven Danchisen (1982); 24- Alexandra Turkul (1980); 24- John Bird No year Provided; 29- Alexandra Dotsenko (1980); 30- Rita Felenchak (1996); 31- Jevgeny Cernonok (1980); 31- Janice Timko (2021)



VIGILS FOR NOVEMBER 26

Susan Guzy 4 In loving memory of Grandfather Michael, Godfather Peter, Uncle Joseph

For the health of Roger, Patti, Basil, Gary, Ed, Irene

In loving memory of Grandfather John

Birthday blessings to brother Gary, Many years!

Jean Hileman 1 Special intentions

Laura Kovach 4 Birthday blessings to Andrew.

For health and/or healing of Beverly S., Patti O., Tony M., Matushka Michelle, Hannah S., Barbara D., Pauline O., George K., Joe H., Margi H., Betty K., Ben F., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Sharon D., John D., and Karen D.

Safe travels for family and friends.

In memory of Uncle Alex, Ralph Branum, and Ruth Mazur

Sandy Martin 3 In loving memory of dear friend,

Ruth, Safe travels for Cole and Zach,

special intentions

Darlene & Gabe Mazurik 1 Special intentions

Natalie Twarek 8 For the health of Ruth, Health and healing for Father's dad Michal and Matushka's mom Barbara, In memory of Ruth Mazur, Health of Matushka Michelle, For the health and recovery of Basil, Diane, Tony, Patti, Tom Sitzler and Don Kiser, Rick Krynock, For the health of Bev, Health of Roger, Ed, Irene, Father David, Marilyn, Pauline, Judy, Mimi, Tina, Ron, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Kurt, Leslie, Amber, Zach, Jeanne, Dottie, Jamie, Ezra, David, Helen Lis and Tina's dad, Earl, Tom, Loren, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Betty, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Chuck, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, Karen, special intentions

PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Patti Owens / Tony Monastra / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Don Kiser / Ruth / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Jeanne Smith / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Chris Hannon / Subdeacon Roger Pinta / Ed Vangeloff / Irene Vangeloff / Diane Tryon / Sonja Rose / Ron Royhab / James Bargdill / John Beadle / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Elaine Hileman / Betty Kovach / Helen Lis / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Stephanie Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, her unborn baby & Chloe / Gabrielle and her newborn Josey / Carol / Debbie & Marco / Nora. **Other Requests:** Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Sidharth Bijilani – friend of Subdeacon Roger and Debbie Pinta / Anthony / Archpriest David Lis / Bishop Matthias / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Marge Dziama / Kurt Franck / Ben Franklin / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Marsha / Mark Masica / Robert Piznar / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chuck Wiedenhoft / Chris.

Military: Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



ATTENDANCE

11/25 Vespers, 8 attending (2 Guests); 11/26 Divine Liturgy, 22 attending (1 Guest)



READERS LIST

Sunday Dec 3 – Ron
Sunday Dec 10 – Natalie
Sunday Dec 17 – Jake
Sunday Dec 24 – Tim
Sunday Dec 25 – Subdeacon Roger



CLEANING SCHEDULE

Dec 4, Stephanie
Dec 11, Sandy
Dec 18, Roddie
Dec 26, Natalie



SUNDAY OFFERING

Sunday, November 26, 2023

Tithe	\$3,410.00
Candles	\$ 52.00
Vigils	\$ 95.00
Donations	\$ 101.00
Holy Day Donation	\$ 105.00
Zoe for Life (Nov) Charity	\$ 100.00
Christmas Flowers	\$ 90.00
Chandelier	\$ 50.00
Eternal Light	\$ 25.00
Candles at the Cross	\$ 20.00
Bistro 163 (Dec)	\$ 20.00
Cemetery Donation	<u>\$ 100.00</u>
Total:	\$4,168.00

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

6 – Angela Bricker; **11** – Tina Rindfleisch; **13** – Gabe Mazurik; **17** – Tim Heffernan *;
21 – Ed & Irene Vangeloff Anniversary; **23** – Teri Cassell *; **25** – Darlene Mazurik *;
31 – Fred & Christi Soski Anniversary *



CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE 2024

It is time to update the church cleaning schedule for 2024. First, thank you to those who have been on the schedule for many years. We often hear of giving of your TIME, TALENT, or TREASURE. You are the people who have been giving of your TIME and again we thank you.

We are always looking for additional volunteers who would be willing to give of their TIME, once a week, to clean God's house. Cleaning can take place at your convenience,

Monday - Saturday. The weekly cleaning takes less than an hour and your obligation would be once every 2½ to 3 months, depending on the number of volunteers in the rotation. Please contact Laura if you have any questions or wish to be added to the rotation.



KITCHEN REPAIR

As we are planning to make some necessary repairs and updates to our kitchen, we are looking for some volunteers who would be willing to serve as “Kitchen Repair Committee.” If you have some good ideas about the repair, please see Fr. Peter or Ron Royhab and volunteer for the position on the committee. Thank you in advance for your consideration!



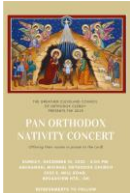
CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA PLANTS

During this time of preparation for the glorious feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, we would like to offer you an opportunity to sponsor the poinsettia plants which will beautify our church for the Nativity Season. We also kindly ask for your prayerful consideration to sponsor liturgical wine, incense, and charcoal that we use during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The forms for sponsoring are located in the vestibule of the church. Thank you in advance for your generosity and care!



CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

Part of our church property is our cute cemetery, where many of our relatives and friends are buried. To keep our cemetery well maintained and beautiful, we must use our church resources to pay for the maintenance and upkeep. Our Parish has a separate “Cemetery Account” that we use for that purpose, but it came to our attention that very few donations are made throughout the year. Therefore, we would like to ask you to consider to donate for the maintenance of our cemetery for the future. Kindly use your envelope marked “CEMETERY” to make your donation. Thank you in advance for your kindness and generosity!



PAN-ORTHODOX NATIVITY CONCERT

Archangel Michael Orthodox Church, 5025 E. Mill Rd., Broadview Hights, OH is sponsoring a **Pan-Orthodox Nativity Concert**, which will take place on **Sunday, December 10th at 4:00 PM**. Refreshments to follow. Please see the flyer on the bulletin board!



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“**Bistro 163**” is the charity we donate to for the month of December.



OTTAWA COUNTY HOLIDAY BUREAU

The Ottawa County Holiday Bureau – Danbury Unit will be distributing vouchers for 2023. In 2022 the Danbury Holiday Bureau alone was able to touch the lives of 89 families – that’s 254 individuals and 93 of those were children under the age of 18. Without Government Financial support, we depend only on your donations. They can be made out to Danbury Holiday Bureau and mailed to 4941 East Harbor Rd. – Port Clinton, OH 43452.

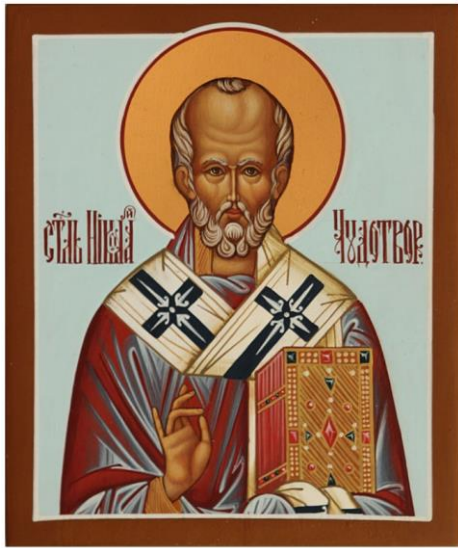
UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Dec. 6th St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (*Wednesday*)

Dec. 9th Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos (*Saturday*)



- Dec. 15th** Nut and Poppysed Rolls Baking (*Friday*)
- Dec. 24th** Sunday before Nativity – Christmas Eve (*Sunday*)
- Dec. 25th** NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (*Monday*)
- Dec. 31st** New Year’s Eve (*Sunday*)
- Jan. 1st** New Year 2024; Circumcision of Our Lord; St. Basil the Great (*Monday*)
- Jan. 5th** Eve of Theophany (*Friday*)
- Jan. 6th** THEOPHANY (BAPTISM) OF OUR LORD (*Saturday*)
- Consider sponsoring a Sunday coffee hour following the Divine Liturgy



Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

Commemorated on December 6

Saint Nicholas, the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia is famed as a great saint pleasing unto God. He was born in the city of Patara in the region of Lycia (on the south coast of the Asia Minor peninsula), and was the only son of pious parents Theophanes and Nonna, who had vowed to dedicate him to God.

As the fruit of the prayer of his childless parents, the infant Nicholas from the very day of his birth revealed to people the light of his future glory as a wonderworker. His mother, Nonna, after giving birth was immediately healed from illness. The newborn infant, while still in the baptismal font, stood on his feet three hours, without support from anyone, thereby honoring the Most Holy Trinity. Saint Nicholas from

his infancy began a life of fasting, and on Wednesdays and Fridays he would not accept milk from his mother until after his parents had finished their evening prayers.

From his childhood Nicholas thrived on the study of Divine Scripture; by day he would not leave church, and by night he prayed and read books, making himself a worthy dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Bishop Nicholas of Patara rejoiced at the spiritual success and deep piety of his nephew. He ordained him a reader, and then elevated Nicholas to the priesthood, making him his assistant and entrusting him to instruct the flock.

In serving the Lord the youth was fervent of spirit, and in his proficiency with questions of faith he was like an Elder, who aroused the wonder and deep respect of believers. Constantly at work and vivacious, in unceasing prayer, the priest Nicholas displayed great kind-heartedness towards the flock, and towards the afflicted who came to him for help, and he distributed all his inheritance to the poor.

There was a certain formerly rich inhabitant of Patara, whom Saint Nicholas saved from great sin. The man had three grown daughters, and in desperation he planned to sell their bodies so they would have money for food. The saint, learning of the man’s poverty and of his wicked intention, secretly visited him one night and threw a sack of gold through the window. With the money the man arranged an honorable marriage for his daughter. Saint Nicholas also provided gold for the other daughters, thereby saving the family from falling into spiritual destruction. In bestowing charity, Saint Nicholas always strove to do this secretly and to conceal his good deeds.

The Bishop of Patara decided to go on pilgrimage to the holy places at Jerusalem, and entrusted the guidance of his flock to Saint Nicholas, who fulfilled this obedience carefully and with love. When the bishop returned, Nicholas asked his blessing for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Along the way the saint predicted a storm

would arise and threaten the ship. Saint Nicholas saw the devil get on the ship, intending to sink it and kill all the passengers. At the entreaty of the despairing pilgrims, he calmed the waves of the sea by his prayers. Through his prayer a certain sailor of the ship, who had fallen from the mast and was mortally injured, was also restored to health.

When he reached the ancient city of Jerusalem and came to Golgotha, Saint Nicholas gave thanks to the Savior. He went to all the holy places, worshiping at each one. One night on Mount Sion, the closed doors of the church opened by themselves for the great pilgrim. Going round the holy places connected with the earthly service of the Son of God, Saint Nicholas decided to withdraw into the desert, but he was stopped by a divine voice urging him to return to his native country. He returned to Lycia, and yearning for a life of quietude, the saint entered into the brotherhood of a monastery named Holy Sion, which had been founded by his uncle. But the Lord again indicated another path for him, "Nicholas, this is not the vineyard where you shall bear fruit for Me. Return to the world, and glorify My Name there." So he left Patara and went to Myra in Lycia.

Upon the death of Archbishop John, Nicholas was chosen as Bishop of Myra after one of the bishops of the Council said that a new archbishop should be revealed by God, not chosen by men. One of the elder bishops had a vision of a radiant Man, Who told him that the one who came to the church that night and was first to enter should be made archbishop. He would be named Nicholas. The bishop went to the church at night to await Nicholas. The saint, always the first to arrive at church, was stopped by the bishop. "What is your name, child?" he asked. God's chosen one replied, "My name is Nicholas, Master, and I am your servant."

After his consecration as archbishop, Saint Nicholas remained a great ascetic, appearing to his flock as an image of gentleness, kindness and love for people. This was particularly precious for the Lycian Church during the persecution of Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Bishop Nicholas, locked up in prison together with other Christians for refusing to worship idols, sustained them and exhorted them to endure the fetters, punishment and torture. The Lord preserved him unharmed. Upon the accession of Saint Constantine (May 21) as emperor, Saint Nicholas was restored to his flock, which joyfully received their guide and intercessor.

Despite his great gentleness of spirit and purity of heart, Saint Nicholas was a zealous and ardent warrior of the Church of Christ. Fighting evil spirits, the saint made the rounds of the pagan temples and shrines in the city of Myra and its surroundings, shattering the idols and turning the temples to dust.

In the year 325 Saint Nicholas was a participant in the First Ecumenical Council. This Council proclaimed the Nicene Symbol of Faith, and he stood up against the heretic Arius with the likes of Saints Sylvester the Bishop of Rome (January 2), Alexander of Alexandria (May 29), Spyridon of Trimythontos (December 12) and other Fathers of the Council.

Saint Nicholas, fired with zeal for the Lord, assailed the heretic Arius with his words, and also struck him upon the face. For this reason, he was deprived of the emblems of his episcopal rank and placed under guard. But several of the holy Fathers had the same vision, seeing the Lord Himself and the Mother of God returning to him the Gospel and omophorion. The Fathers of the Council agreed that the audacity of the saint was pleasing to God, and restored the saint to the office of bishop.

Having returned to his own diocese, the saint brought it peace and blessings, sowing the word of Truth, uprooting heresy, nourishing his flock with sound doctrine, and also providing food for their bodies. The face of Saint Nicholas resembled that of an Angel, resplendent with divine grace. A brilliant ray shone from his face, like that which shone from the face of Moses (Exodus 34:29), so that those who looked at him were astonished. Whoever was oppressed by some affliction or passion of the soul had only to behold the Saint, and his sorrow was eased at once. As for those who conversed with him, they soon found themselves advancing on the path of virtue. Not only were the faithful moved to compassion, but unbelievers as well, and they directed their steps on the path of salvation when they heard him speak. The evil of unbelief which had been implanted in their hearts since childhood was uprooted, and in its place, the word of truth was sown.

Even during his life the saint worked many miracles. One of the greatest was the deliverance from death of three men unjustly condemned by the Governor, who had been bribed. The saint boldly went up to the executioner and took his sword, already suspended over the heads of the condemned. The Governor, denounced by Saint Nicholas for his wrong doing, repented and begged for forgiveness.

Witnessing this remarkable event were three military officers, who were sent to Phrygia by the emperor Constantine to put down a rebellion. They did not suspect that soon they would also be compelled to seek the intercession of Saint Nicholas. Evil men slandered them before the emperor, and the officers were sentenced to death. Appearing to Saint Constantine in a dream, Saint Nicholas called on him to overturn the unjust sentence of the military officers.

He worked many other miracles, and struggled many long years at his labor. Through the prayers of the saint, the city of Myra was rescued from a terrible famine. He appeared to a certain Italian merchant and left him three gold pieces as a pledge of payment. He requested him to sail to Myra and deliver grain there. More than once, the saint saved those drowning in the sea, and provided release from captivity and imprisonment.

Having reached old age, Saint Nicholas peacefully fell asleep in the Lord. His venerable relics were preserved incorrupt in the local cathedral church and flowed with curative myrrh, from which many received healing. In the year 1087, his relics were transferred to the Italian city of Bari, where they rest even now (See May 9).

The name of the great saint of God, the hierarch and wonderworker Nicholas, a speedy helper and suppliant for all hastening to him, is famed in every corner of the earth, in many lands and among many peoples. In Russia there are a multitude of cathedrals, monasteries and churches consecrated in his name. There is, perhaps, not a single city without a church dedicated to him.

The first Russian Christian prince Askold (+ 882) was baptized in 866 by Patriarch Photius (February 6) with the name Nicholas. Over the grave of Askold, Saint Olga (July 11) built the first temple of Saint Nicholas in the Russian Church at Kiev. Primary cathedrals were dedicated to Saint Nicholas at Izborsk, Ostrov, Mozhaïsk, and Zaraïsk. At Novgorod the Great, one of the main churches of the city, the Nikolo-Dvorischensk church, later became a cathedral.

Famed and venerable churches and monasteries dedicated to Saint Nicholas are found at Kiev, Smolensk, Pskov, Toropetsa, Galich, Archangelsk, Great Ustiug, Tobolsk. Moscow had dozens of churches named for the saint, and also three monasteries in the Moscow diocese: the Nikolo-Greek (Staryi) in the Chinese-quarter, the Nikolo-Perervinsk and the Nikolo-Ugreshsk. One of the chief towers of the Kremlin was named the Nikolsk.

Many of the churches devoted to the saint were those established at market squares by Russian merchants, sea-farers and those who traveled by land, venerating the wonderworker Nicholas as a protector of all those journeying on dry land and sea. They sometimes received the name among the people of "Nicholas soaked."

Many village churches in Russia were dedicated to the wonderworker Nicholas, venerated by peasants as a merciful intercessor before the Lord for all the people in their work. And in the Russian land Saint Nicholas did not cease his intercession. Ancient Kiev preserves the memory about the miraculous rescue of a drowning infant by the saint. The great wonderworker, hearing the grief-filled prayers of the parents for the loss of their only child, took the infant from the waters, revived him and placed him in the choir-loft of the church of Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) before his wonderworking icon. In the morning the infant was found safe by his thrilled parents, praising Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker.

Many wonderworking icons of Saint Nicholas appeared in Russia and came also from other lands. There is the ancient Byzantine embroidered image of the saint, brought to Moscow from Novgorod, and the large icon painted in the thirteenth century by a Novgorod master.

Two depictions of the wonderworker are especially numerous in the Russian Church: Saint Nicholas of Zaraïsk, portrayed in full-length, with his right hand raised in blessing and with a Gospel (this image was brought to Ryazan in 1225 by the future wife of Prince Theodore, the Byzantine Princess Eupraxia, who

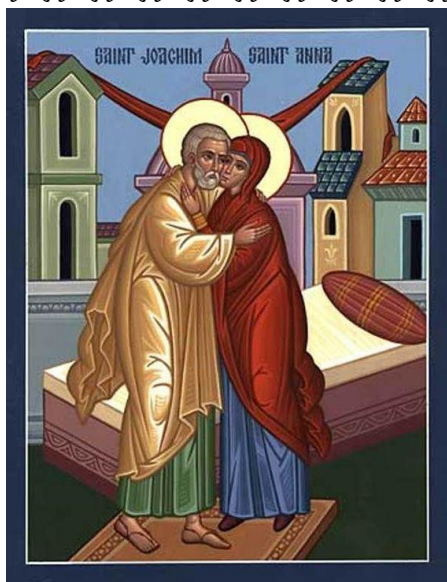
perished in 1237 with her husband and infant son during the incursion of Batu); and Saint Nicholas of Mozhaisk, also in full stature, with a sword in his right hand and a city in his left. This recalls the miraculous rescue of the city of Mozhaisk from an invasion of enemies, through the prayers of the saint. It is impossible to list all the grace-filled icons of Saint Nicholas, or to enumerate all his miracles.

Saint Nicholas is the patron of travelers, and we pray to him for deliverance from floods, poverty, or any misfortunes. He has promised to help those who remember his parents, Theophanes and Nonna.

Saint Nicholas is also commemorated on May 9 (The transfer of his relics) and on July 29 (his nativity). In Italy, the relics of Saint Nicholas are in the Roman Catholic Basilica of Saint Nicholas in Bari; and his left arm is in Saint Nicholas Roman Catholic Church of Rimini.

In Russia, relics of Saint Nicholas are to be found in Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow, and in the Saint Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St. Petersburg.

The right hand of Saint Nicholas is in the church of Saint George the New in Bucharest, Romania. In Greece, portions of the Saint's relics are in the Monasteries of Saint Nicholas Apo Bathia in Euboia, and Phaneromenē in Salaminos. A piece of the Saint's left arm is in the Metropolitan church of Volos. One of the Saint's teeth is at Kalabryta Monastery in the Peloponnēsos.



The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Mother of God

Commemorated on December 9

Saint Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, was the youngest daughter of the priest Nathan from Bethlehem, descended from the tribe of Levi. She married Saint Joachim (September 9), who was a native of Galilee.

For a long time Saint Anna was childless, but after twenty years, through the fervent prayer of both spouses, an angel of the Lord announced to them that they would be the parents of a daughter, Who would bring blessings to the whole human race.

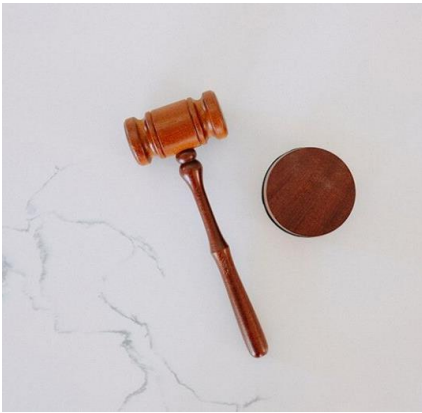
The Orthodox Church does not accept the teaching that the Mother of God was exempted from the consequences of ancestral sin (death, corruption, sin, etc.) at the moment of her conception by virtue of the future merits of Her Son. Only Christ was born perfectly holy and sinless,

as Saint Ambrose of Milan teaches in Chapter Two of his Commentary on Luke. The Holy Virgin was like everyone else in Her mortality, and in being subject to temptation, although She committed no personal sins. She was not a deified creature removed from the rest of humanity. If this were the case, She would not have been truly human, and the nature that Christ took from Her would not have been truly human either. If Christ does not truly share our human nature, then the possibility of our salvation is in doubt.

The Conception of the Virgin Mary by Saint Anna took place at Jerusalem. The many icons depicting the Conception by Saint Anna show the Most Holy Theotokos trampling the serpent underfoot.

“In the icon Saints Joachim and Anna are usually depicted with hands folded in prayer; their eyes are also directed upward and they contemplate the Mother of God, Who stands in the air with outstretched hands; under Her feet is an orb encircled by a serpent (symbolizing the devil), which strives to conquer all the universe by its power.”

There are also icons in which Saint Anna holds the Most Holy Virgin on her left arm as an infant. On Saint Anna's face is a look of reverence. A large ancient icon, painted on canvas, is located in the village of Minkovetsa in the Dubensk district of Volhynia diocese. From ancient times this Feast was especially venerated by pregnant women in Russia.



Can Lawyers Become Saints? Examples of Lawyers Glorified by the Orthodox Church

by Anastasia Parkhomchik

The legal profession has existed for millennia and has enjoyed great respect and prominence throughout its history. Many famous people who excelled in a variety of areas started as lawyers. Writers Honoré de Balzac, Franz Kafka and Wolfgang Goethe, composer Pyotr Rashkovsky and mathematician Pierre Fermat were all former lawyers. Among the Orthodox saints, there are also several members of the legal profession. Some abandoned jurisprudence for the service of God, others ascended to sainthood while practicing law.

Nearly all have benefited from their education as lawyers to become prominent preachers of God's word



Saint Ambrose of Milan was born in 340 to the family of a Roman governor. When he was a small child, the Lord sent an omen predicting his future talent and works. Once, bees covered the face of the sleeping infant. They flew in and out of his mouth, leaving honey on his tongue.

His family's high position enabled Ambrose to receive a brilliant education and secure an appointment as governor of Liguria and Aemilia. When the reigning bishop of Milan died in 374, a dispute broke out between the true Christians and Arian heretics over the candidacy of his successor. As the top civil servant in the city, Ambrose came to church to mediate. He addressed the people with an inspirational speech, and one of the children in the audience cried out, "Ambrose, the bishop!" This compromise candidacy was acceptable to all, and the people rejoiced. Ambrose, a catechumen at the time, considered himself unworthy of the nomination and left the city. Yet the emperor of Rome supported his appointment, and Ambrose could not disobey. He

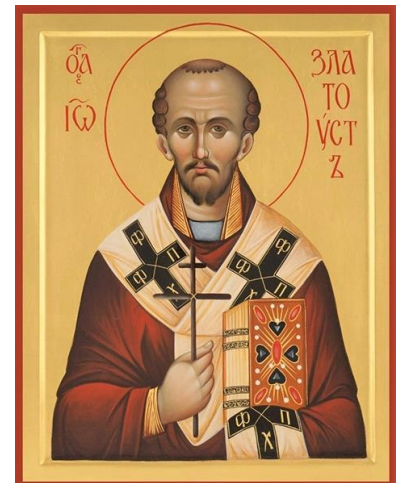
accepted baptism and his ordination as a bishop.

From that time onwards, Bishop Ambrose lived as an ascetic, fully dedicating himself to the defense of the unity of the Church and the fight against the heresies. His preaching was deeply influential. Many heeded to his pastoral word, including the Roman Emperor Theodosius I. Kings and sages from afar came to ask him for his advice and guidance.

Saint Ambrose became famous as a theologian and hymnographer. His hymn "O Lord we praise Thee and confess" forms a part of the Orthodox order of worship.

Saint John Chrysostom, born in 347, grew up in a wealthy pious family in Antioch. He received his elementary education from his mother and continued to study independently until he was eighteen years of age. He continued his education with Pagan teachers, the only option for learning available at his time. First, he studied public speaking at the academy of Livianus, a known Pagan, where he exceeded the mastery of his teacher. He also studied other disciplines.

After completing his studies, Saint John joined the legal profession, the mainstay of all educated young people from the upper classes. Pure and pious at heart, he confronted the harsh reality of the secular world. His appearances at court opened his eyes to the depth of the most disgraceful

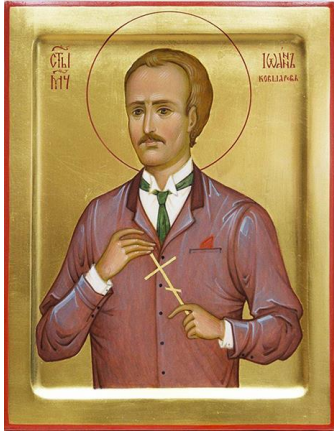


human vices. His experience as a lawyer made him an eloquent critic of human imperfection and helped him become a prominent public speaker. He chose the path of monasticism and took an oath of silence, but he still impressed his flock with his fiery homilies as a presbyter. In his multiple surviving works, saint John Chrysostom presents an example of an uncompromising thirst for truth, urging us to repent and follow the way of God.

A known 19th-century Russian lawyer Fyodor Plevako (1842 – 1908), who impressed many with his public speaking skills, was also deeply religious. By quoting from the Holy Scripture, he often guided the jury and judges towards a just verdict. Someone asked Plevako *about the secret of his eloquence and the professors who were his role models*. Smilingly, he replied, “*I learned the smaller part of my skill at school and university, for which I am thankful to my teachers and pray for them. However, I owe most of my skill to Saint John Chrysostom.*”

The practice of law and the ascent to martyrdom

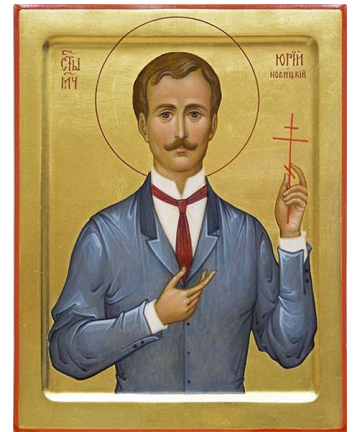
From these ancient saints, let us go over to some of the more recent examples of lawyers who ascended to sainthood in our time by defending rigorously and fearlessly the Church, God and the faithful during the dark times in the history of Russia.



Martyr Ivan Kosharov was born in 1878 to a noble family in Odessa. He finished a gymnasium and graduated from the faculty of law of the local university. In 1906, he moved to Saint Petersburg and joined the bar association as an assistant lawyer. He went on to practice as a solicitor at law in a commercial court.

Starting in 1907, he served as an assistant lawyer of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra and took care of the legal affairs of the Diocese of Petrograd.

Martyr Yury Novitsky, born in 1882, grew up in a family of the nobility. For generations, all its members had adhered to the principle “Conscience and dignity above all”. Yury went in the footsteps of his father and became a lawyer. He graduated with distinction from the faculty of law of Kiev University, where he became a merited professor.



Beyond legal research, he also practiced as a criminal investigator. He ran a shelter for the orphaned children whose parents had been sentenced to hard labor. He was non-political and a steadfast opponent of the death penalty. He was also a believer. While in Kiev, he served at a church and was also an active member of a religious philosophy circle. He had numerous friends among the clergy and philosopher. He was particularly close with Metropolitan Benjamin (Kazansky) of the Diocese of Petrograd.

In 1918, Ivan Kosharov and Yury Novitsky were called to represent the clergy and laity of the Diocese of Petrograd before the Soviet authorities. Ivan Kosharov was appointed commissioner for general church affairs, and Yury Novitsky served as the president of the association of Orthodox parishes of Petrograd. In those years, the Bolshevik government not only concerned itself with the church properties but also exercised surveillance of the activities of the clergy.

Ivan Kosharov wrote memoranda for the Bolsheviks with convincing arguments against the closure of the churches and the censure of the priests. Through his work, this advocate of the Diocese stood in the way of the plans and ambitions of the party. In 1919 and 1921, Kosharov was arrested on suspicion of being a member of the party of the cadets, a rival of the Bolsheviks. Both times, he was released for lack of evidence.

During the famine of 1921, the Soviet government strengthened its attacks on the Church. Under the pretext of raising cash for famine relief, the Bolsheviks confiscated the church valuables, even as they continued to export grain abroad. John and Yury negotiated an agreement whereby the church valuables would be taken with observance of the church canons and with the oversight of the laity. Kosharov also insisted that the cash donations and other assets of the church should be spent on meeting the needs of the people, not the party.

However, the government changed its course abruptly and adopted a more aggressive stance. The reason was the secret order from Vladimir Lenin to accompany confiscation of the church property with mass shootings and persecution of the clergy and laity. Eventually, John and Yury were arrested along with Metropolitan Benjamin and thirteen others on charges of resisting the confiscation of the church assets. In June 1922, the clergy and laity of the diocese of Petrograd were put on trial.

The memoirs of the Arch-presbyter Mikhail Polsky describe the trial as follows. “... *The outcome of the trial was clear from its first minutes. Nevertheless, Kosharov was answering the questions calmly, accurately and, frequently, with sarcasm.*” In his speech in court, he rebuffed the arguments of the prosecution one by one, insisting on his innocence. “*For the execution of sixteen people, the case of the prosecution seems too weak,*” he concluded.

In his final speech, Yury Novitsky also asserted his innocence. “*However, if anyone desires sacrificial deaths, I am fully prepared to take mine. One thing I will ask you is to spare the lives of the others in this dock*”.



There was little doubt from the beginning of the trial about its verdict and the sentences. However, of the 16 defendants, only four received death sentences – Metropolitan Benjamin (Kazansky), Archimandrite Sergius (Shein), Ivan Kosharov, and Yury Novitsky. All the others were sentenced to different terms of hard labor.

In the early hours of 14 August 1922, the men were secretly taken to the outskirts of Petrograd, where they were executed and buried in an unmarked grave. Seven decades later, they were glorified by the Church as saints. Today, believers invoke their names in prayers for God’s help in mounting a successful legal defense and in legal studies.

People of all professions have the chance to serve God for their salvation and ascent to sainthood. The above examples show that members of the legal profession can also be good servants of God. To this end, they need to live by the wisdom of the Gospel and keep a clear conscience.

“O kto, kto Nikolaja l’ubit, O kto, kto Nikolaju služit: Tomu svjatyj Nikolaj Na vsjakij čas pomahaj, Nikolaj, Nikolaj”

O who loves Nicholas, the Saintly, O who serves Nicholas, the Saintly, Him will Nicholas receive, And give help in time of need, Holy Father Nicholas.

