



Saving Warmth of Saint Nicholas

“I was in exile. It was a hungry year. The work was very, very hard. There was nothing to eat. Absolutely nothing. And it was a harsh, grey winter. Transportation was stopped, and deliveries ended. We were completely hungry and cold for several days, and to make matters worse, the temperatures dropped to forty below. Birds froze in flight. And the rags we wore... Many of my brothers fell; they lost their strength and couldn’t walk. I was also getting ready to die from hunger and cold.

“We spent the night in separate huts—tiny, shabby ones. We stuffed the window with rags. There was snow on the floor—it blew in through the cracks. The door was half-open. A whole mass of ice had frozen on it.

“There was a cold wind. I lay there, wrapped in rags. The frost crept up and turned my whole body to ice. Suddenly, I wanted to sleep, badly. I knew perfectly well—that is the herald of death. Had I dozed off but a little... that’s all, I would not have risen for ages. Rising with all my strength, I decided to pray for the last time to Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker. “O God-pleaser,” I said to him, “I’m dying. You see everything. You are the quick helper, so come and help me.” I don’t remember what happened after that, what I said or didn’t say—I don’t remember. I only heard a loud knocking at the door. I opened it. There was a strong gust of wind and cold snow smacked my face. There was no one there.

“But what was this? There were fresh footprints going from the door. I looked on around the corner... A large sack was standing there, and the snow had not yet covered it. My God, what sort of phantom was this? I looked around again for tracks. They went off in the direction of the forest. Not a soul anywhere around—only the snowstorm gathering strength. I took the sack. It was heavy. I took it inside the hut and opened it... My dear children!...” (the elder began to sob) “There were fresh loaves of bread in the sack. And they were still warm, absolutely hot! As if they had just taken them out of the oven. But what oven could be there?! There wasn’t a single home within fifty miles, only exiles and prisoners.

“Well, we lived on this bread a whole week. When the snowstorms quieted they brought us rations, and no one died then. In other camps, we heard, many froze in that storm. But none of ours froze. Wonderworker Nicholas, save us!...”

Archimandrite Philadelph (Mishin) (†1959)

Sunday, December 25

Twenty-eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Feast of Saint Spyridon of Tremithus (†348)

Hieromartyr Alexander of Jerusalem (†250)

Venerable Herman of Alaska (†1836)

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Wednesday, December 28

Moleben 5:30 P.M.

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Sunday, January 1

Twenty-ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Commemoration of Holy Martyr Boniface (†290)

Venerable Ilia of Murom and of Kiev Caves (†1188)

..... News From All The Ends Of The Earth

Rome, Italy: A new study on the Shroud of Turin may put an end to heated discussions over its authenticity. Scientists from Italy's National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development have published a report about the recent 5-year experiments aimed at finding a source of the image that appears on the cloth. According to the report, the Shroud is not a medieval fake. The study indicated that the image may have been created by an intense source of UV light, but no machine in the world would produce the required strength. An art expert Ekaterina Sinitsyna-Santoni said: "The Vatican declares the study on the Shroud of Turin over and states that it can be dated back to the 1st century A.D., therefore, it was not made in the Middle Ages. The experiment also found no pigment in the image which means that it's not man-made. We found organic fragments on the Shroud, namely blood. The image itself was created by light not by laser. According to the Bible, Jesus Christ's body was wrapped in the shroud for 40 hours." The head of the group, Professor Manuela Marinelli, says that the shroud is 95% genuine and that's already something as nobody can give 100% guarantees 2,000 years after it had been found. The Shroud shouldn't be confused with the Veil of Saint Veronica (which was given by Veronica to Jesus when He was carrying His Cross to Golgotha so that He might wipe his forehead. Jesus accepted it and after He handed it back to her, the image of His countenance miraculously impressed upon it), which is held in Vatican's Saint Peter's Basilica. The Veil was an image of a living Christ while the image on the Shroud image appeared after the crucifixion.

Berlin, Germany: During the Christmas season nearly a half million German Christian children will dress as Magi and take part in the Holy Childhood Association's 54th caroling campaign to raise funds for needy children around the world. This year's theme is the right of children to be free of

abuse, exploitation, and violence. Last year's campaign, which raised \$53.7 million, funded 2,100 projects and assisted children in 110 countries.

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: If Muslim migrants were subjected anywhere in the world to the injustices Christians face in Saudi Arabia, it would be front page news. By contrast, these stories quietly trickle out and go largely unreported. International Christian Concern has learned that Saudi security forces arrested 42 Ethiopian Christians at a prayer gathering in Jeddah on Thursday two weeks ago. The location of the detained Christians is unknown. On December 15, Saudi police and security officers raided an evening prayer meeting at the home of an Ethiopian Christian. Those attending the service were beaten and threatened before being arrested. "Security officials broke into the house and captured . . . beat and threatened them for death. . . They divided the men and the women and they are torturing them in prison," an Ethiopian and Eritrean Christian immigrant community living in Europe wrote in an appeal for help to the ambassadors of European embassies in Riyadh. Christian foreign workers in Saudi Arabia are not allowed to practice their faith. Saudi police have been known to raid private worship gatherings in homes, arrest and deport people, and confiscate Christian materials.

Chicago, IL: On Monday, December 19, 2011, the feast day of St Nicholas, Metropolitan Amphilohije of Montenegro officiated at Divine Liturgy at Novo-Gracanica Monastery near Chicago. He was joined by Bishop Longin of Novo-Gracanica and Midwestern America, Bishop Peter of Cleveland, and clergymen of the Serbian Church and of the Russian Orthodox Church. For Bishop Peter, it was a special honor to serve with Metropolitan Amfilohije, who had been his teacher at the Theological Faculty in Belgrade. Additionally, Bishop Longin celebrates his family slava on the feast of St. Nicholas. A festive meal was held at the refectory, and the Serbian choir sang folk songs that were personally meaningful to both Bishop Longin and Metropolitan Amfilohije.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. December bulletin covers' sponsors are the Polomchak family — memory of deceased parents.
2. Today, December 25, the Eternal Light is offered by Ann Hakos.
3. We are grateful to those of our parishioners who came to clean the church and to decorate it for the holy days. Well done!
4. Wednesday, December 28, at 6:00 P.M., there will be a parish board meeting.
5. With great appreciation we would like to list the names of the people, (only those known to us, for there are probably those who did not put their names on the Christmas Flowers sign-up sheet, but still donated for the cause) who donated towards purchasing the flowers which add to the festive atmosphere in the temple: the Petyo family — for health of the family; the Springman family — for health; Madge Petri — for health; Jenny Yacko — for health of the family; the Djuric family — for health of family and friends; Mary Yacko and Helen Urban.
6. Ann Fesko, who resides at Chicagoland Christian Village, sends her greetings and warm wishes to all our parishioners. Ann has prepared for the Nativity of the Lord by partaking of the Mysteries of Confession and Communion.
7. We would like to thank all the faithful who made our Saint Nicholas Dinner such a pleasant event. Many people pitched in and cooperation was rather remarkable. The Dinner was a treat to both the little ones and the adults! Please enjoy some photos of the celebration. We believe the photos do very well conveying the unpredictability of the children and the general excitement.







