



# SS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A PARISH OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA, DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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## December 4, 2011

25<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Greatmartyr Barbara and Martyr Juliana.  
St. John of Damascus. Glorification of  
Hieromartyr Protopresbyter Alexander  
Hotovitzky (1994)

- 9:10am – Hours, Private Confessions
- 9:30am – Divine Liturgy  
Epistle: Eph. 4:1-6  
Gospel: Luke 17:12-19
- Church School
- Panikhida, followed by Coffee Hour, in memory of Benedict Benda
- Annual Parish Meeting

## Schedule of Services

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

6:00pm – Great Vespers with Litya

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6 –

ST. NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER

9:30am – Divine Liturgy.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

6:00pm – Great Vespers and Confessions

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

9:30am – Divine Liturgy

## The Sufferings of St. Nicholas

December 6 is the feast day of Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of everyone from longshoremen to embalmers, and of places from New York City to Argentina. In fact he is the patron of more occupations, causes, people and places than any other saint we know of.

The stories of his humility and compassion are well-known. He had no ambition to become a bishop, but accepted the office in obedience. When he saved three marriageable and impoverished girls from disaster by providing money, he planned to do it secretly. There are stories of sailors caught on stormy seas, defenseless peasants wrongly accused of crimes, and countless others in need or in danger who were saved by his intercession. His kindness to children helped them to see Christ in him, so that even if their life circumstances were harsh, they knew a Savior cared for them.

But additional aspects of his life give even more luster to his example. Though he was not a martyr, Saint Nicholas suffered greatly in his life, and had to stand up to powerful forces that could have undermined the Church.

He became a bishop at the beginning of the fourth century and during the reign of Diocletian, a Roman emperor who detested Christianity as an enemy of Rome's glory. Nicholas, having become a publicly visible leader of the Christians, was imprisoned and tortured. The incarceration was not brief, either. Not until Constantine ascended the throne were the Christian prisoners released.

It was not only outward threats that faced the Church during Nicholas' time as bishop. Within the Church the Arian heresy, denying that Christ was truly the Son of God, was widely popular. Bishop Nicholas had to work against its falsehoods, and defend his people against its influence.

## Intercessory Prayer

### THE LIVING:

Eva Benda, Valentina Benda, Cathryn Christensen, Olga DeMay, Marianne Guagenti, George Hook, Peter Mazula, Walter Milk, Helen Pirniak, Stephen & Lillian Sokol, Elizabeth Zuber.

### THE DEPARTED:

Peter Kalada, Benedict Benda, Georgette Saba, Matilda Skripak, Andrew Bacsik, Helen Pawlush, Mary Milk, Antonina Rotko, Helen Cotrone, June Bianchini, Marianne Benda.

At the Council of Nicaea the threat of Arianism was made physically present. Arius had eloquence enough to make his "reasonable" version of the faith appealing to listeners and did so at the Council, speaking to those in attendance in his intelligent and engaging manner. How painful it must have been for Nicholas to hear this smooth talker distort everything for which Christ had died and risen. His memories of his own imprisonment and that of so many others who would not compromise the faith only added to the pain.

So Saint Nicholas exemplifies more than loving benevolence. He also shares our experience of suffering, and shows how to carry on without flinching from it. The words of Jesus Christ in Luke 21: 12-19, which are read on this day, apply to Nicholas' life: "...they will lay their hands on you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors...some of you will be put to death; you will be hated by all for my name's sake."

But Christ's final words in this passage are the ones Nicholas would encourage us to remember: "By your endurance you will gain your lives."

## Today's Memorial Offering



- Sanctuary Lamp – in memory of Lydia Wanko, on the Anniversary of her Birth – by John & Helen Wanko.



## Announcements

❖ A heartfelt Thank You to all of you who have helped out in any possible way to make the lecture of His Grace Bishop Michael in our Church this past Wednesday a great success. May God bless and keep all of you in His loving care for many blessed years!

❖ On Sat. December 10, 2011, the Feast of the Kursk-Root Icon of the Theotokos, there will be a Joint Divine Liturgy between the Primates of ROCOR & the OCA at the Synodal Cathedral of the Sign (75 East 93<sup>rd</sup> St. New York, NY). The Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30am. Everyone is welcome.

❖ We are in the Nativity Fast, which ends after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, December 25<sup>th</sup>. Please remember the importance of the spiritual part of the Fast – make proper preparations and receive private Confession and Holy Communion during this time.

## Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy. It is our joy to have you with us today. If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return as often as you are able.

While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to join us in venerating the Cross, receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy and for fellowship in our Church Hall after the service.