

**Chapter 1 : Nicholas of Myra - Livius**

*St. Nicholas Biography Saint (c. ) St. Nicholas was a Christian bishop who provided for the poor and sick, and is the basis for the popular character of Santa Claus.*

Introduction St Nicholas on an icon in the church of St Demetrius, Thessaloniki The cult of Saint Nicholas started as early as the fourth century in the little port of Myra in the southwest of what is now called Turkey. Here, the venerable saint died on the sixth of December of an unknown year. His mortal remains were buried in a church outside the city walls, and were brought to Bari in Italy in , where they have been venerated ever since. This is about all we know with certainty. It is not reassuring that one of the first references to the saint, a laudatory speech by patriarch Proclus of Constantinople in , already includes subject matter that clearly belongs to the realm of legend. The first hagiography of the bishop of Myra, written by an otherwise unknown Michael the Archimandrite, can be dated to c. This is not necessarily a problem. Three and a half centuries are the same interval that separates Alexander the Great from his main biographers. In this article, we shall make some educated guesses. It is a brief text that can easily be printed on some twelve pages. Nicholas hears about an impoverished man who is unable to offer a dowry to potential suitors for his three daughters. Not even men of lower rank thought about marrying them. Therefore, their father thought about ordering them to work in a brothel, so that he and the family would have some income. During the night, he throws a purse filled with gold coins through one of the windows of the house of the poor people. Now, the first daughter has a dowry, can leave home, and marry. There was Nicholas again, who venerated the Trinity and was the servant of one particular Person of the Holy Triad, our true Lord Christ. The generous giver is caught in the act by the father, who expresses his gratitude. The modest saint makes the poor man promise that he will never tell what has happened. Michael fails to explain how, if the father remained silent, the story became so well-known. In another story, we learn how three generals, who have, although innocent, been jailed, are released when the saint appears to the responsible officials in Constantinople, although he is at the same time seen in his study in Myra. A variant on this story deals with three men who have been condemned to death but are saved by a timely intervention of the good bishop. Reliability The credibility of these stories is not strengthened by the fact that there are many parallels in other, often non-Christian, sources from Asia Minor. He also has the power of bilocation. It is understandable that scholars have scrutinized the hagiographies with some skepticism. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many *Altertumswissenschaftler* believed that the study of history could only become a true science if it was willing to sacrifice all romantic notions and beautiful stories. In and , the German researcher Gustav Anrich published the two volumes of his *Hagios Nikolaos*, in which he argued that the real Nicholas of Myra was lost beyond recovery. This, however, appears to have been a bit premature. In , the Italian scholar Gerardo Cioffari published *San Nicola nella Critica Storia*, in which he also studied the historical tradition, accepting that a story is not necessarily untrue because it happens to be inspiring or romantic. Sometimes, the truth can be beautiful. Eleven years later, the Dutchman Aart Blom added *Nikolaas van Myra en zijn tijd*, in which he approached the ancient bishop from a different angle: Of course there are some minor errors. For example, the Road of the Divine Twins Greek: *Dioskouroi* is referred to as the Sanctuary of *Dioskourides*. But the general impression is that the Life, Works, and Miracles of our Holy Father Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia is based on a source that was written by someone who was well-acquainted with the topography of the ancient Lycian port. Myra did indeed boast a temple dedicated to Artemis and archaeologists have excavated the granaries that are mentioned in the story of the famine. Archaeology Myra, church of the tomb of Saint Nicholas Another conclusion of recent research is that the original tomb of Saint Nicholas was located outside the city walls, where the church restored by Czar Nicholas II of Russia still stands on top of what has been identified as an ancient necropolis. In the first half of the fourth century, Roman law still forbade that people were buried inside cities. Just across the border, Saint Victor lies buried outside ancient Xanten. When in the mid-fourth century the final victory of Christianity was within sight, new churches with tombs started to be erected within the walls of a town. The location of the church of bishop Nicholas therefore suggests that the cult at his tomb has a venerable antiquity, and it is

perhaps true that he died in , as is sometimes maintained. But it was not the only place of Christian worship in Myra. It was not in the center of the city, and this is significant. In , the first Christian emperor Constantine the Great died and was succeeded by his son Constantius II , who was a devout believer too. It was now certain that the Church would not lose what it had achieved and obtained during the reign of Constantine, and full of self-confidence, the Christians started to build churches in the old urban centers, which had until then been dominated by traditional gods. The location of the church in Andriake suggests that its foundations were laid after , when Christianity was recognized as *religio licita*, and before , when it was no longer necessary to build churches in the suburbs. The Lycian coast The excavators have argued that Nicholas must have been the builder of the church near the harbor. This may explain why the bishop of Myra became the patron of the sailors. It can be terribly rough in front of the rocky Lycian coast, and many a sailor must have prayed for a safe haven, such as Myra, where the ecclesiastical community must have taken care of castaways. So it seems that Nicholas lived during the reign of Constantine the Great. Perhaps there is another argument, although it is not very strong: Parallels Some bones, perhaps belonging to Nicholas of Myra In c. Some twenty years later, Augustine of Hippo published his spiritual autobiography, the *Confessions*, in which he describes his conversion at some length. Ever since, every saint worthy of a hagiography was awarded a story about the moment on which he choose a new way of life. Without a conversion tale, the subject of the treatise was simply not recognizable as a saint. It is possible - although we must not stress this point - that Michael had access to a source written before the conversion tales became popular. Capitoline Museums, Rome Italy Assuming that Nicholas lived during the reign of Constantine the Great, it is likely that he attended the Council of Nicaea , a very important meeting of clerics. The bishops discussed the way the Church should be organized, but were also occupied with a complex question that was considered to be very important: The first point of view is easier to harmonize with monotheism: Christ is simply the first creature. The opposing point of view results in a logical inconsistency: This is the incomprehensible but inevitable conclusion of the Prologue of the Gospel of John "the Word was God" , and the venerable bishops gathered in Nicaea accepted this as orthodox. Later catechisms would admit that people cannot fully understand how the three Divine Persons are one and the same God, because this is a mystery. It is no coincidence that he offered dowries to three young women, freed three generals, and saved three people who were condemned to death. In a later legend, he saved three boys. Although Michael the Archimandrite is clearly influenced by later dogmatic debates, it cannot be excluded that the bishop of Myra spent some thoughts on the Arian controversy, although he must have had more pressing pastoral concerns. Although the original minutes of this council were destroyed, people have tried to reconstruct the list of bishops who agreed to the orthodox formula to describe the Trinity, a brief text that became famous as the Nicene Creed. This list is known from eleven medieval copies. Only three of them mention Nicholas, but one of these is considered to be among the best copies. This means that at a comparatively early stage, the name of Nicholas was either added to or omitted from the list. In the first scenario, a copyist was surprised that the popular and famous bishop of Myra was not mentioned in the list, and corrected what he believed to be an error. The popularity of the cult of Nicholas can be deduced from the rapidly increasing number of boys called Nicholas. Nicholas strikes his opponent. Fresco from the Soumela Monastery Turkey There is a late source that appears to confirm the last-mentioned scenario. According to this legend, Nicholas was so angry at an advocate of Arianism that, overcome by apostolic zeal, he struck his opponent. Not everyone appreciated this blow against Arianism, and the presidency of the Council decided that Nicholas was no longer allowed to wear the ornaments of a bishop. Therefore, Nicholas is shown without mitre on Greek icons. In fact, this anecdote is embarrassing, and this is a reason why it is unlikely to have been invented. An exception is the story about the blow at the Council of Nicaea. There is one other detail without parallel. It can be found in the story about the three dowries. The anecdote itself has a parallel in the *Life of Apollonius*, but there is a significant difference: Philostratus tells that Apollonius had pity with the father and does not digress upon the fate of the daughters. In the legend of Nicholas, a future in the brothel needs to be averted. This is unique in ancient literature. Care for women was not a top priority in the Roman empire, and the anecdote, in this form, cannot have its roots in a pagan environment. On the other hand, in early Christianity, women played an important role e. Only when the new faith had become a mass

religion, the attitudes of the majority of the Mediterranean population started to infiltrate Christianity. The position of women became worse. In fact this story, which does not assume a miraculous suspension of the laws of physics, is unique. The conclusion appears to be inevitable that it simply is true. This page was created in ; last modified on 29 June

### Chapter 2 : Life of Saint Nicholas

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See Article History Alternative Titles: Nicholas, also called Nicholas of Bari or Nicholas of Myra, flourished 4th century, Myra, Lycia , Asia Minor [near modern Demre, Turkey]; feast day December 6 , one of the most popular minor saints commemorated in the Eastern and Western churches and now traditionally associated with the festival of Christmas. In many countries children receive gifts on December 6, St. According to tradition, he was born in the ancient Lycian seaport city of Patara, and, when young, traveled to Palestine and Egypt. He became bishop of Myra soon after returning to Lycia. He was imprisoned during the persecution of Christians by the Roman emperor Diocletian but was released under the rule of Constantine the Great. He attended the first Council of Nicaea , where he allegedly struck the heretic Arius in the face. He was buried in his church at Myra, and by the 6th century his shrine there had become well known. In researchers dated one such relic fragment, a piece of hip bone, from a church in the United States and confirmed it to be from the 4th century. He was reputed to have given marriage dowries of gold to three girls whom poverty would otherwise have forced into lives of prostitution and to have restored to life three children who had been chopped up by a butcher and put in a tub of brine. In the Middle Ages , devotion to Nicholas extended to all parts of Europe. He became the patron saint of Russia and Greece; of charitable fraternities and guilds; of children, sailors, unmarried girls, merchants, and pawnbrokers; and of such cities as Fribourg, in Switzerland, and Moscow. Thousands of European churches were dedicated to him—one, built by the Roman emperor Justinian I at Constantinople now Istanbul , as early as the 6th century. Nicholas, tempera on wood by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, c. Learn about the life of the historical St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra. After the Reformation , devotion to Nicholas disappeared in all the Protestant countries of Europe except Holland, where his legend persisted as Sinterklaas a Dutch variant of the name St. Dutch colonists took this tradition with them to New Amsterdam now New York City in the American colonies in the 17th century. The resulting image of Santa Claus in the United States crystallized in the 19th century, and he has ever since remained the patron of the gift-giving festival of Christmas. Under various guises, St. Nicholas was transformed into a similar benevolent gift-giving figure in the Netherlands, Belgium, and other northern European countries. Learn More in these related Britannica articles:

### Chapter 3 : The Life and Legends of Saint Nicholas

*Nicholas, St. Learn about the life of the historical St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. After the Reformation, devotion to Nicholas disappeared in all the Protestant countries of Europe except Holland, where his legend persisted as Sinterklaas (a Dutch variant of the name St. Nicholas).*

The following text has been translated from Greek by Fr. Nicholas Palis and printed with his permission and with his blessings. Let us praise our protector, the godly Nicholas; as one endowed with blest virtue, he shone forth as true priest of the most high god, and was His fervent worshipper. For, by his holy life on earth, he hath left us most sublime, divine and unfailing teachings of long-suffering, meekness, patience, unfeigned humility and true God-like love. Humble of spirit and pure of heart, illustrious in life and dispassionate of a truth, wast thou, O wise one. Thou didst illumine all by the virtues and dost grant grace unto them that draw nigh unto thee; and by thine intercessions, thou dost heal them that call upon thee, O Father Nicholas. Introduction by Father Nektarios Serfes: Just like the parish priest is called "Batushka" in the Russian Orthodox Church, this term is used to express love and respect for the parish priest. It is also an expression of love and respect among the Greek Orthodox Church to call the honorable and loving parish priest "Papa". Today it is true we have few elders left. But it does seem that even in the most impossible times, when true holiness appears to have vanished from the earth, that God, somehow, by His own unfathomable means, raises up men and women to manifest the fullness of holiness. To find simple holiness in a priest of our end times is a great joy. This spiritual joy can give us unfortunate ones, struggling to persevere in a life of holiness, an inspiration to carry on and to continue to seek out a little holiness in our own lives. The Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church can become our guides on our spiritual journey to heaven, and as such, lead our footsteps in the way of righteousness. Papa Nicholas Planas and I can now say with great spiritual joy, St. Nicholas of Athens was recently canonized a Saint in the Orthodox Church. We will now learn of a parish priest who lived in utter simplicity, that heaven walked with and protected. Such single mindedness bends toward earth It was said that when it rained he remained dry in torrential downpours as he walked from Church to Church praying the whole time At times, while he prayed, people saw him rise above the ground. Let us all indeed behold a holy man of God, who truly loved God and loved all. He was born in Naxos in His parents, captain John and Augustina, were quite well off but were also good people, with the simple and pure soul which distinguishes island people. They had their own estate, with a little chapel in the middle of it by the name of Saint Nicholas. Very frequently little Nicholas Planas would hide in the chapel wearing a bed sheet, and he would chant whatever he knew, as he was still a small child. At other times he would gather his friends, and they would "celebrate" the Divine Liturgy. He learned his first letters from his grandfather, Fathe George Melissourgos. Near him, Nicholas learned to read the psalter. One winter night--as Papa Nicholas himself related about his childhood life--they were sitting near the fireplace and he told his father, "Father, at this moment our boat, the Evangelistria, is sinking outside Constantinople. Immediately, to dismiss the idea of holy foreknowledge which he had, he said, "All small children have foreknowledge. His father died young. He had been pained in soul, not only for the loss of their boat, but even more so for the young lads who were lost along with it. Thus he left Nicholas an orphan at fourteen years of age. His mother took him and they went--together with his sister--to Athens. They settled somewhere between St. John of Plaka and St. Panteleimon of Ilissou because there were quite a few Naxiotes builders and workers there. Their days were difficult. His mother worked washing other homes so that they could survive. She took her children together with her no matter where she was working, because she was afraid of Athens. She trembled at the idea that they might take the evil path. When he reached seventeen years of age, his mother married him off to a good girl from Kythira, Eleni Provelegiou. They had one child. Afterwards he was ordained a deacon in the Church of the Transfiguration, Plaka, on July 28, Five years later, on March 2, , he was ordained a priest in the church of the Holy Prophet Elisha. In the meantime, however, his wife reposed. He had no estate because had split it with his sister and had put his own portion as collateral on a loan, so that a compatriot of his could be saved from debt. He was compassionate, and had no care for worldly things or estates. Night and day he was absorbed in divine worship,

and with his small parish of St. Panteleimon in Neo Kosmo which was comprised of thirteen families. The people loved him. His simplicity, his island piety, his kindness, his chastity, his lack of love for money, drew everyone to divine worship. Everyone wanted him to bless their homes, their stores. And he ran everywhere joyously. From aristocratic homes down to the poorest homes, he never kept a drachma on him. The poor always waited outside the church for him to distribute whatever he had in his pocket. However, a certain priest without a parish of his own, in cooperation with the council members of St. Panteleimon, kicked him out of his parish and sent him to the Church of Saint John, "the Hunter" as they called it then in Vouliagimeni. The new parish was very poor and was comprised of eight families. His payment as a priest was one piece of meat from the fattened lamb of Meatfare Sunday or Christmas. This did not bother him, however, because fasting was most important in his life. So long as he had a church in which to liturgize, he was happy. His having been kicked out of St. Panteleimon, however, bothered him a lot. One night, as he was leaving St. John to go home, he was crying on the road. The place was deserted at that hour. Suddenly he saw on his path a young lad said to him, "Why are you crying, Father? I am always with you. Every year, on the feast of St. One year, as he himself related, he was sick and had a fever. His relative did not allow him to go for his customary vigil. But because of the love which Father Nicholas had for the Saint, he went anyway. The fever left me. For fifty consecutive years he liturgized daily from 8. Not even with the invasion of the Anglo-French in did he interrupt his series of Liturgies. In the narrow streets of the Acropolis at 2: He ate every night. He fasted from oil every lenten period. As a confessor he was not strict about fasting, though when it concerned himself, he was very strict. One day someone gave him a little chocolate and told him it was fastworthy. He took it in his hand, looked at it closely and said, "Just to sure, take it back! He commemorated names for whole hours. First, departed patriarchs, metropolitans, priests, deacons and the Naxiotes, and the Ahtenians. The names they gave him, he commemorated for many months. Every now and then his spiritual children, to give him some rest, would take the old papers and secretly rip them up, because he took them with him to all the churches. He would place them in two large handkerchiefs and tie them up like a type of package, and place them on his hip. When he would arrive home and take them off his hip--because he had two packages, one with names and the other with holy relics--they would ask him. When will you rest? Some would kiss his hands, others his cassock, others his little head since he was short. Most of the time he liturgized in the church of the Prophet. On feast days he would he would go to his own parish. In the church of St. John there was a caretaker who disliked the elder. One day she swore at him with hand gestures, and at night she saw Saint John saying to her, "What did my servant do to you that you would swear at him like that? In the morning her cheek was black and blue. The next day when Father Nicholas went to church the caretaker went in front of him, fell at his feet, asked his forgiveness, and simultaneously asked him to step on her hands. The meek and clam one went off to one side.

### Chapter 4 : About St. Nicholas | St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

*Saint Nicholas of Myra (traditionally 15 March - 6 December ), also known as Nicholas of Bari, was an early Christian bishop of the ancient Greek city of Myra in Asia Minor (modern-day Demre, Turkey) during the time of the Roman Empire.*

NICHOLAS An example of the Faith and a life of humility, as a teacher of abstinence you did inspire and lead your flock, and through the truthfulness of your deeds were exalted by greatness, through your humility uplifting all and by poverty gaining wealth. Father and hierarch Nicholas, intercede with Christ our God that our souls may be saved. His uncle was the bishop of the town and educated Nicholas for life in the Church. He is beloved throughout the Christian East for his kindness and help, both during his life and afterward. The most famous story about St. Nicholas concerns a man who, because of extreme poverty, had agreed to sell his three daughters into slavery. Nicholas heard about it and came in the night, leaving behind him a bag with enough gold in it to save one of the children. Three times he came secretly so that the man would not know from where the money came. Because of this and similar acts, St. Nicholas became the patron saint of children and the type of the cheerful giver of good gifts. In the Protestant West, which suppressed the invocation of saints, Saint Nicholas became popularly known as Santa Claus. In accordance with early Christian tradition, saints are remembered in the Orthodox Church on the date of their passing from this life into the next. Saint Nicholas is thus remembered on December 6. Orthodox Christianity maintains that even though people are dead according to this life, that they are alive in the spiritual realm, and continue to pray for us. Our "prayers to the saints" are actually requests that they pray for us, much as we ask believers who are still alive in the flesh to pray for us. The remains of St. Nicholas now repose principally in Bari, Italy, having been transported there in A. A fragrant liquid myrrh still exudes from the relics. Miracles are performed even today through the intercessions of St. Turkey also claims to possess bones of Saint Nicholas. Our objectives are to sustain and grow our programs, expand our ministries, enhance the communications with our parishioners, increase the utilization of our physical facilities, make capital improvements, continue to reduce our debt and create and endowment that will serve as a long-term investment for the church. Click on these links for key updates:

## Chapter 5 : Santa Claus - HISTORY

*St. Nicholas, also known as "Nikolaos of Myra," was a fourth century saint and Greek bishop of Myra. He was born in Asia Minor in the Roman Empire as an only child to Christian parents.*

He is beloved in the Orthodox Church, and indeed far beyond, for his kindness, almsgiving and aid, meted out both during his earthly life and after. 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 his honour. One recalls that as an infant in the baptismal font, Nicholas stood on his feet for three hours in honour of the Trinity. Another proclaims him a childhood faster, not accepting milk from his mother until after the conclusion of evening prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays. He thrived on reading divine texts, and earned a reputation as a devoted youth who often would not leave the church, reading the sacred texts late into the night. Blessed is the flock that will be worthy to have him as its pastor, because this one will shepherd well the souls of those who have gone astray, will nourish them on the pasturage of piety, and will be a merciful helper in misfortune and tribulation. The ministry of Fr Nicholas Nicholas approached his duties as priest and teacher of the faith with the same fervour his uncle had witnessed in him during his childhood. Despite his youthfulness, many of the faithful considered him an elder, and his ability to respond to questions of the faith in love and wisdom earned him the deep respect of those in the city. He was noted in particular for the fervency of his prayer and kind-hearted nature, and the attention to charitable work that characterised his priestly ministry. Following the injunction of Christ, Fr Nicholas sold his possessions and, following his parents deaths a few years after his ordination, distributed his inheritance to the poor and afflicted, who would often seek him out for assistance. In one of his most well-known acts of selflessness as a young priest, Fr Nicholas reacted to the intention of a wealthy businessman of Patara who had fallen on hard times and lost his fortune. Desperate, the man had determined to sell the bodies of his three daughters in order to raise funds for the family. Convinced of the goodness of the gesture, though unaware of the identity of his benefactor, the man used the funds to arrange for his eldest daughter to be married honourably to a nobleman. Later the man arose to find the act had been repeated; and eventually, a third time. In each instance, the priest made his offering secretly, attempting to conceal his works of charity. Icons today continue to recount the miraculous nature of his voyage there by ship, during which a great storm arose Nicholas having earlier predicted that it would. Seeing in a vision the devil climbing aboard the ship, Nicholas warned the crew and prayed for the salvation of the craft and its occupants, and the sea shortly calmed. Arriving in the Holy Land, Nicholas made his pilgrimage of the holy places in Jerusalem, especially Golgotha where Christ was crucified. But he was stopped by a divine voice, which forbade this course and urged him to return home. This he did, though still longing for quiet and the solitary life. Having been moved by his experiences on Mount Sion in Jerusalem, he entered the monastic community of Holy Sion in Lycia which had earlier been founded by his uncle ; but again, the Lord made known to him that this was not to be his path. The voice of the Lord is said to have come to him: This [monastery] is not the vineyard in which you shall bring forth the fruit I expect of you; but turn back, go into the world, and let my Name be glorified in you. Consecration to the episcopate Shortly after his arrival in Myra, the elder Archbishop of that city, a certain John, died. There was some discussion as to who should succeed him as the chief bishop of the region, the local synod of bishops desirous that the new archbishop should not be an individual chosen by men for the office, but one revealed by God. One of their eldest number beheld a vision of the illumined Christ, who indicated that the old bishop should go into the church, for the one who was first to enter it that night—“who would be called Nicholas—“was he who should become the new archbishop. When Fr Nicholas arrived, the bishop stopped him. He was not appointed by an assembly of men but by God himself. Now we have the one that we desired, and have found and accepted the one we sought. Under his rule and instruction we will not lack the hope that we will stand before God in the day of his appearing and revelation. The persecutions under the emperor Diocletian effected that region deeply, and for a time, Bishop Nicholas was imprisoned with other Christians for refusing to bow down and worship the idols of the imperial cult. He was remembered later for the exhortations he delivered to his fellow

prisoners, urging them to endure with joy all that the Lord lay before them, whether chains, bonds, torture or even death. He returned to his flock in Myra, which received him with joy, and resumed his episcopal work. He was known as a great ascetic, as he had been since his childhood, and for his gentleness and love. The First Ecumenical Council, Nicaea In the year , a great council of bishopsâ€”the largest in the history of the Churchâ€”was held in the city of Nicaea under the patronage of Emperor Constantine, who had, since his miraculous vision of the cross at Milvian bridge, himself converted to Christianity. This synod, which in later years would come to be known as the First Ecumenical Council commemorated on the seventh Sunday after Pascha , was attended by over three hundred bishops from throughout the Christian world, to establish various canons of order for the growing Church, affirm the faith, and combat heresy. In particular, the teachings of Arius, a presbyter in Alexandria, were addressed and condemned by the council, which formulated a statement of faith that, with later refinements at Constantinople in , became the Creed of the Church. St Nicholas was a participant at this council, and is particularly remembered for his zeal against Arius. Shocked by this behaviour, especially given that the canons forbid clergy from striking any one at all, yet uncertain of how to react to such actions by a hierarch they knew and respected, the fathers of the council determined to deprive Nicholas of his episcopal emblems traditionally his omophorion and the Gospel book , and placed him under guard. However, a short time later, several of the assembled fathers reported having a common vision: The renown of his miraculous acts was widespread in his own lifetime. As he had secretly delivered gold, many years before, to the father of three destitute daughters, so he secretly delivered gold to an Italian merchant by some accounts, this gold was left miraculously by an apparition of the saint appearing to the merchant in Italy , convincing him to sail to Myra with a shipment of grain. And so by his prayers and deeds, his city of Myra was rescued from a terrible famine. The saint approached the executioner, who had already raised his sword to issue the death-blow, and swiftly removed it from his hands. He then approached the governor and denounced his unjust action. This episode is remembered as connected directly to another: St Nicholas appeared to Emperor Constantine in a dream and urged him to reverse this sentence, which the emperor did. Prisoners unjustly condemned prayed to him and were delivered. The poor prayed to him and were provided for. It continues to this day. A church was built in his honour by the residents of Myra, in which his relics were kept for many centuries. Alexei Cominos ascended the throne of the Byzantine Empire in , in which year Asia Minor suffered various attacks and threats of barbarian invasion. However, a priest in the Italian city of Bari soon beheld a vision in which Nicholas appeared and informed him that he did not wish to remain in a city as barren as the defeated Myra. He instructed the priest to remove his body from the city. On their arrival in the city in , the travellers from Bari found the Church of St Nicholas in Myra abandoned, save for the presence of four devoted monks. These led the men to the coffin of the saint, which they had hid to keep it safe from invaders. Some time later, the ships arrived in Bari, and were met at the port by throngs of the local faithful. Nicholas requested that his identity be kept secret. Show me this earthly angel who preserves us from sinful perdition, so that I might know who has snatched us from the poverty which oppresses us from evil thoughts and intentions. O Lord, by your mercy secretly done for me by the generous hand of your servant unknown to me, I can give my second daughter lawfully into marriage and with this escape the snares of the devil, who desired by a tainted gain, or even without it, to increase my great ruin. Return to the world, and there glorify my Name. By some, Nicholas was in fact censured and placed under guard, and this act was later reversed upon the vision of various fathers; by others, the vision pre-empted the censure, and Nicholas was not deprived of his episcopal emblems. By yet another tradition, Arius complained of his maltreatment and thus Nicholas was confined, during which time the vision appeared to him, though the omophorion and Gospel book were not apparitions but real. These he showed to the guards the next morning, who reported the miracle. The bishop was then released under orders of the emperor.

Chapter 6 : Life of St Nicholas the Wonderworker / theinnatdunvilla.com

*St. Nicholas facts: The fame achieved by Roman Catholic saint, Nicholas of Myra (died AD) has continued to grow since his imprisonment and subsequent death at the hands of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian.*

Nicholas The fame achieved by Roman Catholic saint, Nicholas of Myra died AD has continued to grow since his imprisonment and subsequent death at the hands of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian. The much-loved figure that we associate with the Christmas holiday came to be known simply as " Santa Claus. Nicholas is not difficult. So little is known of his personal life, that we must rely on the legends that have survived. As early as the sixth century, churches were being built in his honor throughout Europe. By the Middle Ages , he had become the patron saint of both Greece and Russia. Devotion to Nicholas declined during the Protestant Reformation of the fifteenth century. The Netherlands was the only Protestant nation to maintain and embellish the legend of Nicholas. The Dutch kept his feast day of December 6 as the time to lavish presents on children who left their shoes out the night before. By the middle of the nineteenth century America had embraced the custom as the center around which all of Christmas revolved. His parents were wealthy and Nicholas might have lived the life of a spoiled son. Instead, it was reported that from childhood he lived a holy and humble life. When his parents died of a plague, Nicholas began to serve the poor near his home and in the surrounding towns and countryside. An editorial from a December issue of The Ukranian Weekly, noted that, according to legend, Nicholas, became the bishop of Myra after the bishop of that city died and other bishops gathered to elect a new prelate. They asked God to show them a worthy successor. Apparently the oldest of the bishops had a vision in his sleep that the first man to enter the church in the morning to pray should be consecrated. That person was Nicholas. By the time Nicholas died, on December 6, , word of his kind deeds and purported miracles was widespread public knowledge. The Roman Emperor Diocletion persecuted him for his Christian faith. Nicholas was buried in the church at Myra, where he had served as bishop. By the eleventh century, his reputation had spread as far as Italy, due in part to merchants and sailors who traveled throughout Europe and Asia. A Benedictine abbot named Elia ordered the construction of a cathedral to properly house the relics. These bones reportedly turned into liquid. The container holding this liquid is still carried as the centerpiece in a parade honoring him in Bari, on his feast day of December 6. Reportedly, the scent of this liquid is like that of a sweet perfume, making him the patron saint of perfumers. One of the most famous stories about Nicholas was that he used his wealth to protect three young girls, whose father was too poor to provide them with adequate dowries. Without dowries, the girls were doomed to a life of prostitution as the only means of supporting themselves. In a book titled Saints Preserve Us! Their symbol was derived from this legend of St. Constantine freed them the next morning. As a result, Nicholas became known as the patron saint of prisoners. A rather offbeat story recounted by Kelly and Rogers, tells of Nicholas visiting a local butcher during a famine. To his surprise, he was served meat. The bishop lost no time in restoring them to life, and "has been a patron of children-in-a-pickle ever since. Some argue that Santa Claus is based on the Germanic god, Thor, who was associated with winter and the Yule log and rode on a chariot drawn by goats named Cracker and Gnasher. That the historical person of Nicholas became transformed into the kindly Santa Claus from a pagan legend was due to the notoriety he gained by extending a helping hand in the aid of children. His was not an age known for protecting children. Instead they were often left to beg when they lost their parents or lived in poverty. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Nicholas legend was that his story influenced future generations to demonstrate kindness to children, at least once a year. The modern tradition has remained true to the simple bishop of Myra, who devoted his life to helping the poor. Further Reading Delaney, John J. Pocket Dictionary of Saints, Image Books, The Ukranian Weekly, December 13,

**Chapter 7 : Nicholas of Tolentino - Wikipedia**

*St. Nicholas, also known as "Nikolaos of Myra," was a fourth century saint and Greek bishop of Myra. Nicholas was born in Asia Minor in the Roman Empire as an only child to Christian parents. Nicholas would take nourishment only once on Wednesdays and Fridays, and that in the evening according to the canons.*

The much-loved figure that we associate with the Christmas holiday came to be known simply as "Santa Claus. Nicholas is not difficult. So little is known of his personal life, that we must rely on the legends that have survived. As early as the sixth century, churches were being built in his honor throughout Europe. By the Middle Ages, he had become the patron saint of both Greece and Russia. Devotion to Nicholas declined during the Protestant Reformation of the fifteenth century. The Netherlands was the only Protestant nation to maintain and embellish the legend of Nicholas. The Dutch kept his feast day of December 6 as the time to lavish presents on children who left their shoes out the night before. By the middle of the nineteenth century America had embraced the custom as the center around which all of Christmas revolved. His parents were wealthy and Nicholas might have lived the life of a spoiled son. Instead, it was reported that from childhood he lived a holy and humble life. When his parents died of a plague, Nicholas began to serve the poor near his home and in the surrounding towns and countryside. An editorial from a December issue of *The Ukrainian Weekly*, noted that, according to legend, Nicholas, became the bishop of Myra after the bishop of that city died and other bishops gathered to elect a new prelate. They asked God to show them a worthy successor. Apparently the oldest of the bishops had a vision in his sleep that the first man to enter the church in the morning to pray should be consecrated. That person was Nicholas. By the time Nicholas died, on December 6, word of his kind deeds and purported miracles was widespread public knowledge. The Roman Emperor Diocletian persecuted him for his Christian faith. Nicholas was buried in the church at Myra, where he had served as bishop. By the eleventh century, his reputation had spread as far as Italy, due in part to merchants and sailors who traveled throughout Europe and Asia. A Benedictine abbot named Elia ordered the construction of a cathedral to properly house the relics. These bones reportedly turned into liquid. The container holding this liquid is still carried as the centerpiece in a parade honoring him in Bari, on his feast day of December 6. Reportedly, the scent of this liquid is like that of a sweet perfume, making him the patron saint of perfumers. One of the most famous stories about Nicholas was that he used his wealth to protect three young girls, whose father was too poor to provide them with adequate dowries. Without dowries, the girls were doomed to a life of prostitution as the only means of supporting themselves. In a book titled *Saints Preserve Us!* Their symbol was derived from this legend of St. Constantine freed them the next morning. As a result, Nicholas became known as the patron saint of prisoners. A rather offbeat story recounted by Kelly and Rogers, tells of Nicholas visiting a local butcher during a famine. To his surprise, he was served meat. The bishop lost no time in restoring them to life, and "has been a patron of children-in-a-pickle ever since. Some argue that Santa Claus is based on the Germanic god, Thor, who was associated with winter and the Yule log and rode on a chariot drawn by goats named Cracker and Gnasher. That the historical person of Nicholas became transformed into the kindly Santa Claus from a pagan legend was due to the notoriety he gained by extending a helping hand in the aid of children. His was not an age known for protecting children. Instead they were often left to beg when they lost their parents or lived in poverty. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Nicholas legend was that his story influenced future generations to demonstrate kindness to children, at least once a year. The modern tradition has remained true to the simple bishop of Myra, who devoted his life to helping the poor. Further Reading on St. Nicholas Delaney, John J. *Pocket Dictionary of Saints*, Image Books, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, December 13, *Encyclopedia of World Biography*. Copyright The Gale Group, Inc.

**Chapter 8 : 19 Little-Remembered Facts About St. Nicholas**

*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.*

Take the Saints Trivia Quiz now! The great veneration with which St. Nicholas has been honored for many ages and the number of altars and churches all over the world that are dedicated in his memory are testimonials to his wonderful holiness and the glory he enjoys with God. As an episcopal see, and his childhood church falling vacant, the holy Nicholas was chosen bishop, and in that station became famous by his extraordinary piety and zeal and by his many astonishing miracles. The Greek histories of his life agree he suffered an imprisonment of the faith and made a glorious confession in the latter part of the persecution raised by Diocletian, and that he was present at the Council of Nicaea and there condemned Arianism. It is said that St. Nicholas died in Myra, and was buried in his cathedral. This is not for lack of material, beginning with the life attributed to the monk who died in as St. Methodius, Patriarch of Constantinople. Nevertheless, the universal popularity of the saint for so many centuries requires that some account of the legends surrounding his life should be given. Nicholas, also known as "Nikolaos of Myra," was a fourth century saint and Greek bishop of Myra. Nicholas would take nourishment only once on Wednesdays and Fridays, and that in the evening according to the canons. The child, watched over by the church, enlightened his mind and encouraged his thirst for sincere and true religion. Nicholas was determined to devote his inheritance to works of charity, and his uncle mentored him as a reader and later ordained him as a presbyter priest. An opportunity soon arose for St. Nicholas and his inheritance. A citizen of Patara had lost all his money, and needed to support his three daughters who could not find husbands because of their poverty; so the wretched man was going to give them over to prostitution. Here was a dowry for the eldest girl and she was soon duly married. At intervals Nicholas did the same for the second and the third; at the last time the father was on the watch, recognized his benefactor and overwhelmed Nicholas with his gratitude. It would appear that the three purses represented in pictures, came to be mistaken for the heads of three children and so they gave rise to the absurd story of the children, resuscitated by the saint, who had been killed by an innkeeper and pickled in a brine-tub. Coming to the city of Myra when the clergy and people of the province were in session to elect a new bishop, St. Nicholas was indicated by God as the man they should choose. This was during the time of persecutions in the beginning of the fourth century and "as he [Nicholas] was the chief priest of the Christians of this town and preached the truths of faith with a holy liberty, the divine Nicholas was seized by the magistrates, tortured, then chained and thrown into prison with many other Christians. But when the great and religious Constantine, chosen by God, assumed the imperial diadem of the Romans, the prisoners were released from their bonds and with them the illustrious Nicholas, who when he was set at liberty returned to Myra. Methodius asserts that "thanks to the teaching of St. Nicholas the metropolis of Myra alone was untouched by the filth of the Arian heresy, which it firmly rejected as death-dealing poison," but says nothing of his presence at the Council of Nicaea in . According to other traditions St. Nicholas was not only there during the Council of Nicaea in , but so far forgot himself as to give the heresiarch Arius a slap in the face. The conciliar fathers deprived him of his episcopal insignia and committed him to prison; but our Lord and His Mother appeared there and restored to him both his liberty and his office. As against Arianism so against paganism, St. Nicholas was tireless and often took strong measures: He was the guardian of his people as well in temporal affairs. The governor Eustathius had taken a bribe to condemn to death three innocent men. At the time fixed for their execution Nicholas came to the place, stayed the hands of the executioner, and released the prisoners. Then he turned to Eustathius and did not cease to reproach him until he admitted his crime and expressed his penitence. When the men were back again in Constantinople, the jealousy of the prefect Ablavius caused them to be imprisoned on false charges and an order for their death was procured from the Emperor Constantine. When the officers heard this they remembered the example they had witnessed of the powerful love of justice of the Bishop of Myra and they prayed to God that through his merits and by his instrumentality they might yet be saved.

Nicholas appeared in a dream to Constatine, and told him with threats to release the three innocent men, and Ablavius experienced the same thing. In the morning the Emporor and the prefect compared notes, and the condemned men were sent for and questioned. When he heard they had called on the name of the Nicholas of Myra who appeared to him, Constatine set them free and sent them to the bishop with a letter asking him not to threaten him any more, but to pray for the peace of the world. For a long time, this has been the most famous miracle of St. Nicholas, and at the time of St. Methodius was the only thing generally known about him. The accounts are unanimous that St. Nicholas died and was buried in his episcopal city of Myra, and by the time of Justinian, there was a basilica built in his honor at Constantinople. An anonymous Greek wrote in the tenth century that, "the West as well as the East acclaims and glorifies him. Wherever there are people, in the country and the town, in the villages, in the isles, in the furthest parts of the earth, his name is revered and churches are built in his honor. Images of him are set up, panegyrics preached and festivals celebrated. All Christians, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, reverence his memory and call upon his protection. And his favors, which know no limit of time and continue from age to age, are poured out over all the earth; the Scythians know them, as do the Indians and the barbarians, the Africans as well as the Italians. There was great competition for them between Venice and Bari. Bari won and the relics were carried off under the noses of the lawful Greek custodians and their Mohammedan masters. On May 9, St. A new church was built to shelter the relics and the pope, Bd. Urban II, was present at their enshrining. Nicholas has been present in the West long before his relics were brought to Italy, but this happening greatly increased his veneration among the people, and miracles were as freely attributed to his intercession in Europe as they had been in Asia. At Myra "the venerable body of the bishop, embalmed as it was in the good ointments of virtue exuded a sweet smelling myrrh, which kept it from corruption and proved a health giving remedy against sickness to the glory o f him who had glorified Jesus Christ, our true God. Nicholas" is said to flow to this day. It was one of the great attractions that drew pilgrims to his tomb from all parts of Europe. The image of St. Nicholas is, more often than any other, found on Byzantine seals. In the later middle ages nearly four hundred churches were dedicated in his honor in England alone, and he is said to have been represented by Christian artists more frequently than any saint, except our Lady. Nicholas is celebrated as the patron saint of several classes of people, especially, in the East, of sailors and in the West of children. The first of these patronage is most likely due to the legend that during his lifetime, he appeared to storm tossed mariners who invoked his aid off the coast of Lycia and brought them safely to port. Sailors in the Aegean and Ionian seas, following a common Eastern custom, had their "star of St. Nicholas" and wished one another a good voyage in the phrase "May St. Nicholas hold the tiller. This custom in England is not a survival from Catholic times. It is not the only "good old English custom" which, however good, is not "old English," at any rate in its present form. The deliverance of the three imperial officers naturally caused St. Nicholas to be invoked by and on behalf of prisoners and captives, and many miracles of his intervention are recorded in the middle ages. Curiously enough, the greatest popularity of St. Nicholas is found neither in the eastern Mediterranean nor north-western Europe, great as that was, but in Russia. Andred the Apostle, he is patron of the nation, and the Russian Orthodox Church even observes the feast of his translation; so many Russian pilgrims came to Bari before the revolution that their government supported a church, hospital and hospice there. He is also the patron saint of Greece, Apulia, Sicily and Loraine, and of many citiesand dioceses including Galway and churches innumerable. At Rome the basilica of St. Nicholas in the Jail of Tully in Carcere was founded between the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh centuries. He is named in the preparation of the Byzantine Mass. Nicholas became recognized as a saint long before the Roman Catholic Church began the regular canonizing procedures in the late 10th century. Therefore, he does not have a specific date of canonization, rather records of him exist in a gradual spread until his stories became widley known and celebrated.

*Nicholas of Myra was born early in the fourth century AD in Patara, a city in the ancient district of Lycia, in southern Asia Minor (modern Turkey). His parents were wealthy and Nicholas might have lived the life of a spoiled son.*

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. 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, worshipping 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. Return to the world, and glorify My Name there. 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. This was particularly precious for the Lycian Church during the persecution of Christians under the emperor Diocletian. 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. 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. 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 , 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. At Novgorod the Great, one of the main churches of the city, the Nikolo-Dvorischensk church, later became a cathedral. Moscow had dozens of churches named for the saint, and also three monasteries in the Moscow diocese: 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. 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 embordered 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 Zarsk, portrayed in full-length, with his right hand raised in blessing and with a Gospel this image was brought to Ryazan in by the Byzantine Princess Eupraxia, the future wife of Prince Theodore. She perished in 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.