

27TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST NICHOLAS OF MYRA ARCHBISHOP

Dear Believers and Children,

Congratulations on the feast of St. Nicholas!

We all look forward to this holiday all year round, especially our children. We are all waiting for a miracle. Dear children, St. Nicholas will definitely come to each of you. He even went to see someone last night.

On this day, we feel happy! And the source of our joy is the example of the mercy of St. Nicholas, which he celebrated in a special way in his life. In honor of St. Nicholas, the Wonderworker today, let us turn our attention to this important virtue of the Christian life - charity.

Every saint has laid the foundation of his holiness, of his spiritual life, a certain feature of love: zealous prayer, fasting, and helping the poor. The main feature of the sanctity of St. Nicholas is merciful love of neighbor. In this way, he approached God and became like Him, embodying in his life the main feature of God - love and mercy. The saints say that if the Lord had to leave heaven for a while and depart, He would leave St. Nicholas in His place.

Among the various vital needs of man in the first place is love and mercy. Love is the root of all other spiritual gifts: patience, humility, meekness, truth, respect, reverence, and kindness. "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things," as St. Paul teaches in his letter to the 1 Corinthians (13: 4-7).

Mercy is an important feature of love. It has many ways of manifestation. The church's catechism teaches us the seven works of charity for the body and for the soul. The seven works of mercy for the body are to feed the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to shelter the homeless, to visit the sick, to visit the imprisoned, or ransom the captive, and to bury the dead. The seven works of mercy for the soul are to admonish the sinners, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the afflicted, to bear patiently who wrong us, to forgive offenses, and to pray for the living and the dead. What motivates people of different nationalities and religions to cultivate such great respect for this holy day? Why did St. Nicholas become a world saint? The answer is simple, because he fulfilled Christ's commandment of love to the end. His whole life was filled with great love and compassion for another person and a desire to follow Jesus Christ's example. St. Nicholas is truly the embodiment of true love for one's neighbor, because he taught and loved not only by word but also by his own example. The popularity of St. Nicholas is due primarily, to his good upbringing, which was invested in him by

his parents. They carefully raised their son in a deep Christian spirit and gave him a good education. Out of love for God, St. Nicholas was born with great mercy for his neighbors.

Many times, St. Nicholas rescued those who were in trouble at sea and brought the suffering from captivity and imprisonment. Having lived a holy and righteous life, he peacefully departed to the Lord in his old age. After his repose, St. Nicholas, being at the Throne of the Most High, did not cease and does not cease to help all who in prayer call him for help. It is no coincidence that the Holy Church calls him after the Lord God and the Mother of God all hope. In Ukraine, since the times of Kievan Rus, the memory of St. Nicholas has been solemnly honored, as evidenced by the large number of churches and monasteries consecrated in honor of this great saint of Christ.

Faith in God's mercy and giving it to others is a spiritual light for all people in the world. As God's mercy is inexhaustible to us, so we do not tire of showing mercy to our neighbors and thus filling the world with God's presence. Thus, we fulfill the words of Christ, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Schedule of Christmas services!!!

The Feast of the Nativity According to the Flesh of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

THURSDAY Dec. 24, 2020 – **Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great / Mass:**

6:00pm – Patronage Church (Arbutus)

9:00pm – St. Gregory Church (Beltsville)

FRIDAY Dec. 25, 2020 – **Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom / Mass:**

9:00am - Patronage Church (Arbutus)

11:15am - St. Gregory Church (Beltsville)

SATURDAY Dec. 26, 2020 – **Synaxis of the Theotokos:**

Divine Liturgy / Mass

9:00am - St. Gregory Church (Beltsville)

11:15am - Patronage Church (Arbutus)

SUNDAY Dec. 27, 2020 – **Sunday after Christmas, Stephen Protomartyr:**

Divine Liturgy / Mass

9:00am - Patronage Church (Arbutus)

11:15am - St. Gregory Church (Beltsville)