

International Crusade for Holy Relics USA



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St. Nicholas of Myra

(Also called NICHOLAS OF BARI)

[Catholic Encyclopedia: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11063b.htm>]



St. Nicholas, BC

Bishop of Myra in Lycia; died 6 December, 345 or 352. Though he is one of the most popular saints in the Greek as well as the Latin Church, there is scarcely anything historically certain about him except that he was Bishop of Myra in the fourth century.

Some of the main points in his legend are as follows: He was born at Parara, a city of Lycia in Asia Minor; in his youth he made a pilgrimage to Egypt and Palestine; shortly after his return he became Bishop of Myra; cast into prison during the persecution of Diocletian, he was released after the accession of Constantine, and was present at the Council of Nicaea. In 1087 Italian merchants stole his body at Myra, bringing it to Bari in Italy.

The numerous miracles St. Nicholas is said to have wrought, both before and after his death, are outgrowths of a long tradition. There is reason to doubt his presence at Nicaea, since his name is not mentioned in any of the old lists of bishops that attended this council. His cult in the Greek Church is old and especially popular in Russia. As early as the sixth century Emperor Justinian I built a church in his honour at Constantinople, and his name occurs in the liturgy ascribed to St. Chrysostom. In Italy his cult seems to have begun with the translation of his

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Merry Christmas
And a
Blessed New Year!

Special Points of Interest

- Official ICHRusa membership ring available (see page 3 for detailed picture)
- Visit ICHRusa's webpages at www.ichrusa.com

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relics to Bari, but in Germany it began already under Otto II, probably because his wife Theophano was a Grecian. Bishop Reginald of Eichstaedt (d. 991) is known to have written a metric, "Vita S. Nicholai." The course of centuries has not lessened his popularity. The following places honour him as patron: Greece, Russia, the Kingdom of Naples, Sicily, Lorraine, the Diocese of Liège; many cities in Italy, Germany, Austria, and Belgium; Campen in the Netherlands; Corfu in Greece; Freiburg in Switzerland; and Moscow in Russia. He is patron of mariners, merchants, bakers, travellers, children, etc. His representations in art are as various as his alleged miracles. In Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, they have the custom of making him the secret purveyor of gifts to children on 6 December, the day on which the Church celebrates his feast; in the United States and some other countries St. Nicholas has become identified with Santa Claus who distributes gifts to children on Christmas eve. His relics are still preserved in the church of San Nicola in Bari; up to the present day an oily substance, known as *Manna di S. Nicola*, which is highly valued for its medicinal powers, is said to flow from them.



Relics at St Nicholas de Port, France



Vial of sacred oil from the relics



Tomb at Bari, Italy



Relics at Antalya Museum



Tomb (Turkey)

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Did you know?...

As a member of ICHR, you can access the forum at the ICHR website.

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* **Next Issue** *
* **of the** *
* **Guardian** *
* **will be in** *
* **March 2003** *

From Sacramental to Sacrilege

Chev. Thomas J. Serafin, V.V.

There comes a time in an individual's life that the future no longer appears as attractive as it once did. The past that once appeared so dank and lethargic appears to be the only hope at keeping the future intact.

Sacramentals are definitely under attack in the modern church. Many sacramentals that we accepted and for the most part took for granted as children are gone, and soon they will be nothing more than a vague memory of Grandpa's. The tactile necessity of sacramentals is absolutely needed in our Christian community. How would have the saints been able to mediate upon the great mysteries of the Passion of Christ if it were not for statuary and artwork. How would have the Monks of the medieval church been able to praise Christ were it not for the sacred hymns? The Stations of The Cross instituted by the Blessed Mary herself, the Mother of God, gave us an opportunity to share in the Passion of Christ.

Now unfortunately the very items created and established in the early Church to help us pray, praise, mediate, and show reverence and devotion are being removed from sight. Is this the old adage of "out of sight, out of mind"? The act of genuflection and blessing one's self with Holy Water upon entering a Church is slowly disappearing. General behavior and demeanor within the Church proper is at an all time low. I guess with the removal of anything that centers our focus upon the Holy Trinity and the Communion of Saints with a total lack of holy protocol, it is fairly easy to set up the congregation to focus on the needs of the Parish and the local ordinary not the Crucified Christ.

We have for the most part lost the battle to retain our visual sacramentals, it happened so fast, we were too ignorant and naive. Now that the tabernacle, art, statues, relics, liturgy, Extreme Unction, traditional hymns, forty hours, Eucharistic adoration, Stations of the Cross, Benediction, the rosary, indulgencies, and protocol are gone, what will be next? Is the next sacrament to be Holy Water, no water to bless with or to Baptize with! Is it possible? Well, could anyone have ever imagined that the sacred remains (relics) of our great saints would be removed from the Altar and sold or thrown out?!

Relics have always been at the center of controversy in the Christian community. Their authenticity has been a subject of much dispute between the believer and the unbeliever. History has supported the cultus of the saints and their remains, but history has also supported the claims of thief, scandal, forgery, and abuse.

The sale of religious relics and artifacts has spawned a neo-middle ages marketplace. The advent of the Internet auction houses has created platforms that replace the back alleys and crowded market places from a thousand years ago.

The ICHRusa has monitored and archived the sale of relics on the Internet since 1998. The demand and price has increased dramatically since then, highlighted by the tour of St. Therese's relics. Relics with questionable authenticity have appeared on a regular basis, we have addressed that issue, and reeducated the faithful. Relics that have no authenticities and could possibly be fraudulent or stolen and transported across International borders have sur-

faced. To add to the marketing frenzy, sellers have auctioned the same relic on multiple sights, as well as participated in shill bidding.

The remains of the saints have become, “the kidnapped”, the monies collected from the auction, “the ransom”. The nEW Judas has found a way to betray the faith of the masses and increase his thirty pieces of silver via the auction block. The Internet auction houses have become the new “field of blood.” By the habitual refusal to resolve the practice and ban the sale of relics they have reinforced their complicity in this sacrilegious act.

Society, big business, apathy, over tolerance, and political correctness have forever changed the way we think, believe, and live our daily lives. In this callous act of selling the relics there is no Civil or Penal precedent, still we must look at the greater issue, the morality, and the consequences.

We cannot simply put our tradition and historical artifacts on the auction block to the highest bidder. Does Christ himself witness us moving rapidly toward the same scenario as the moneychangers in the Temple? There was an eternal consequence for Judas as a result of his betrayal. If a person is uninformed as to doctrine and dogma that is correctable, but in today’s society there is no such thing as invincible ignorance to a person who uses the information super highway to sell a \$20.00 sacramental for \$500.00 or more, or worse acquire relics from Churches under false pretenses and then resell them.

The trade routes of Europe were defined by the travel of pilgrims to the sights of veneration; from the Holy City of Jerusalem to Santiago di Compostella. Trade and culture defined by the bones of the Saints. Now, the Internet superhighway takes the relic to be sold and resold for mere profit to the four corners of the world, void of any spirituality.

In 1996, a question arose as to the authenticity of relics being distributed in the United States. The relics were available through the mail or they can be ordered over the phone. An extensive list of available relics is yours for the asking.

The most troubling aspect of this sacrilege is that it is being perpetrated by Catholics, or by individuals who portray themselves to the public as Catholic, and in some cases they present themselves as holier than the Holy Father.