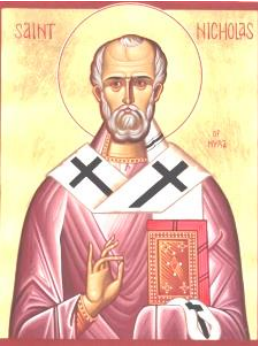


## The Real Saint Nicholas



Of the many saints commemorated by the Christian Church, Nicholas (d. A.D. 342) is one of the best known. Very little is known historically of him, although there was a church of Saint Nicholas in Constantinople as early as the sixth century. Research has affirmed that there was a bishop by the name of Nicholas in the city of Myra in Lycia (part of Turkey today) in the fourth century. From that coastal location, legends about Nicholas

have traveled throughout time and space. He is associated with charitable giving in many countries around the world and is portrayed as the rescuer of sailors, the protector of children, and the friend of people in distress or need. In commemoration of Sinte Klaas (Dutch for Saint Nicholas, in English Santa Claus), December 6 is a day for giving and receiving gifts in many parts of Europe.

## SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Malachi 3:1–7b

Philippians 1:2–11

Luke 3:1–14 (15–20)

### ***The Preaching of Repentance Prepares Us for the Coming of the Lord***

The preaching and baptism “*of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*” (Luke 3:3) prepare us for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The historic work of John the Baptist was completed with the first Advent of our Lord Jesus in the flesh, but the ministry of the Forerunner continues in the preaching of Law and Gospel and in Holy Baptism. Through His messengers, the Lord calls people of all nations to “*see the salvation of God*” (Luke 3:6). Our haughtiness is removed, and our mountains of pride are brought low, but the Lord humbles us in order to exalt us in His mercy. As the Lord has begun this good work of repentance in us, so also does He perfect it by His Word and Holy Spirit, and He “*will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ*” (Phil. 1:6). He purifies us to be His priestly people, precious in His sight, abounding in faith and love, so that we offer our very lives in righteousness to the Lord (Mal. 3:3–4).

## **INTROIT**

*Psalm 81:8, 10-11, 13; Antiphon: Luke 3:4b*

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

*Hear, O my people, while I admonish you!*

O Israel, if you would but listen to me!

*I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.*

Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

*But my people did not listen to my voice;*

Israel would not submit to me.

*Oh, that my people would listen to me,*

that Israel would walk in my ways!

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning,**

**is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

## **COLLECT OF THE DAY**

**P** *Stir up our hearts, O Lord,  
to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son,  
that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds;  
through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with the You and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.*

**C** *♪[Amen]♪*

## **GRADUAL**

*Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alt.*

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!*

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

*Behold, your king is coming to you;*

righteous and having salvation

*Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the LORD!*

From the house of the Lord we bless you.

## **RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS**

*After each petition:*

**P** *Lord, in Your mercy,*

**C** **hear our prayer.**

### **Malachi 3:1-7b (ESV)**

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. <sup>3</sup> He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

<sup>5</sup> “Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

<sup>6</sup> “For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. <sup>7</sup> From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.

### **Philippians 1:2-11 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, <sup>5</sup> because of your partnership in the gospel from

the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

### **Luke 3:1-20 (ESV)**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>4</sup> As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways,

<sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

<sup>7</sup> He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” <sup>12</sup> Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” <sup>13</sup> And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” <sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup> As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I

am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>18</sup> So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. <sup>19</sup> But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, <sup>20</sup> added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

***Next Week’s Readings from God’s Word:***

December 12 Third Sunday in Advent (Series C):

Zephaniah 3:14-20, Psalm 85, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 7:18-28 (29-35)