



St. Nicholas of Myra Feast: December 6

This popular Fourth Century saint was a native of Lycia, Asia Minor, where St. Paul planted the faith. It is said that he fasted from early youth and “kept unsullied the innocence of his heart.” He was made Archbishop of Myra and proved himself a true shepherd by his zeal and piety.

Greek historians say that he suffered imprisonment and torture for the faith with many other Christians, but was released when Constantine granted liberty to the Church. According to St. Methodius, “thanks to the teaching of St. Nicholas the metropolis of Myra alone was untouched by the filth of Arian heresy.” He also fought strenuously against paganism and destroyed the temple of Artemis.

Fabulous miracles are attributed to him, one by which three boys were restored to life after being cut to pieces by a brutal innkeeper who robbed them. The story of his having saved three poor girls from prostitution by throwing purses of gold through the window of their home so that they had a sufficient dowry to get married is at least a partial basis for his veneration as a patron of children.

Nicholas died at Myra and was buried

there. Later a basilica was built over his tomb and his veneration spread over both the East and West. A later historian wrote that “wherever there are people, in the country and towns, in the villages, in the isles, in the farthest parts of the earth, his name is revered and churches are built in his honor.”



At Myra his body was said to exude “a sweet-smelling myrrh” which kept it incorrupt and cured the sick. In 1087 his body was taken to Bari in Italy where it continued to work many miracles. The flow of the “myrrh,” called “manna of St. Nicholas,” is said to continue to this day.

In northern Europe the custom arose of giving presents to the children on his feast, which was near Christmas. This custom was popularized by the Dutch of New Amsterdam (New York) who shortened his name to Sant Klaes – our modern Santa Claus – now widely identified with Christmas. St. Nicholas, together with St. Andrew, is joint patron of Russia.†

In this issue ...

St. Nicholas of Myra	1
Faith, Hope and Charity	2
News from the Apostolate	
- “What We Did for Our Summer Vacation”	2
The Rosary: Mary’s Gift to All.....	4



“What We Did for Our Summer Vacation”

Historic trains, Christmas trees, flower arranging, animal breeding, New York talent, cotton candy, antiques, fried dough, home brew—what does the message of the Fatima Center have to do with all these?

Well, from August 27 to September 7, workers from the Fatima Center manned a booth at the New York State Fair, where all these activities were exhibited. The Fair, one of the largest in the country, annually attracts about a million visitors. The

rides and the entertainment acts are a big part of the attraction, but competitors in hundreds of classes also show off their accomplishments in animal breeding, horticulture, crafts and fine arts. Organizations who want to attract interest also set up exhibits.

But the competition for exhibit space can be stiff. And for those who do obtain a space, the regulations for display scaffolds, materials, handouts and workers are numerous and precise: a display must not exceed certain dimensions; handouts must be printed a certain way; only a certain number of free materials, etc. This was a new venture for the Fatima Center, an opportunity which had come up suddenly and late. There was very little time to apply for space, but Our Lady’s maternal assistance not only gained acceptance, but also put Her booth in one of the best locations at the Fair in an air conditioned building. (Not an insignificant feature in the last two weeks of August!)

Between stops at ice cream vendors and games of chance, thousands of spectators wander through displays of every sort; it was among such company that Our Lady found a niche at the State Fair. Nestled between an exhibit on “Mormons” and knitwear, the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima stood on a dais, overlooking the work of a small cadre of tireless volunteers and staff, who worked many twelve-hour days. At the very front of

the display stood a second, smaller, 32” statue of Our Lady of Fatima, which was raffled off at the end of the Fair.

The reactions of visitors were encouraging: “I think it is so great that you are here,” “This exhibit is beautiful,” “I never knew anything about Fatima.” Some had seen the advertising van that circled the Fair throughout the day, to direct visitors to the exhibit. Catholic and non-Catholic alike visited the display, and staff answered questions all day. Many Catholics expressed a certain pride in the display, especially against exhibits from false religions that were under the same roof.

The Fatima Center was delighted to be able to reach a new audience who had virtually no knowledge of the events of Fatima. While introducing the Fatima Message to many, the event also reawakened others’ interest in Our Lady of Fatima, in the Rosary and in the Scapular. The genial assistance the visitors found at the Fatima Center booth enabled them to sense the solace to be found by ‘taking the hand’ Our Lady offers us through the Rosary.

Following the Fair, we will be able to supply our recent visitors with additional materials to aid them. Kindly offer a prayer that our follow-up may be well-received, for the sake of these souls and others. †

Faith, Hope and Charity

by Father Francis Spirago

Note: It is the custom when praying the Holy Rosary to offer our first three Hail Mary’s (that precede the First Mystery) for an increase of Faith, Hope and Charity. Here we take a brief look at these three theological virtues.

The virtues that unite our soul to God are the three theological virtues: Faith, Hope, Charity.

These three virtues are symbolized by a flame; faith is signified by the light it emits, hope by its upward tendency, and charity by the heat it radiates. A tree is also an emblem of these virtues: faith is its root, hope its stem, charity its fruit. Faith lays the foundation of the temple of God, hope raises the walls, and charity crowns the structure. The cross is a symbol of faith, the anchor of hope, while charity is denoted by a burning heart. The greatest of these virtues is charity (1 Cor. 13:13). Without charity, faith and hope are valueless, for God only grants eternal felicity

to those that love Him.

1. The three theological virtues are manifested in the following manner:

The effect produced by the virtue of *Faith* is to make us believe in the existence of God and in His divine perfections.

The effect of the virtue of *Hope* is to make us look for eternal salvation from God, as well as the means that are necessary for its attainment.

The virtue of *Charity* causes us to find satisfaction in God, and to seek to please Him by keeping His commandments.

2. These virtues are fitly termed theological, because God Himself is their object, their motive, and their Author.

God is the object of faith; that is to say, we believe what God has revealed, and all that has reference to God Himself, to His being, His attributes, His works and His will. God is

continued on page 3

FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY
Continued from page 2

the motive of faith, for we believe that which He has revealed because He is omniscient and the highest truth. God is the object of hope; for we hope for eternal happiness, after death, to see God and enjoy Him forever. God is the motive of hope, for we hope for eternal felicity because He is almighty, most bountiful, and faithful to His promises. God is the object of charity, for all our love centers in Him. God is the motive of charity, since we love Him because He is supreme beauty and sovereign goodness. God is also the Author of the three theological virtues, as the following reasons demonstrate:

3. We receive the three theological virtues to render us capable of performing good works simultaneously with sanctifying grace.

When the Holy Spirit enters into the soul, He transforms the powers of the mind, so that it can rise to God with greater facility. When He comes and imparts to us sanctifying



18th Century painting depicting a personification of the three theological virtues.

continued on page 4

grace, a light shines in our heart that awakens faith and hope (2 Cor. 4:6), and a fire is ignited, that kindles a flame of charity (Rom. 5:5). This action of the Holy Ghost within the soul is called the infusion of the three theological virtues. The three theological virtues are infused into the soul (Council of Trent, 6, ch. 7).

The infusion of these virtues has a similar effect as have the rays of the sun in imparting light and warmth to the atmosphere. God does not force these virtues upon us; the freedom of the will is in no wise interfered with. The power of exercising the three theological virtues is imparted in Baptism, and if it be lost, it is given again in the Sacrament of Penance. As the seed lies dormant in the bosom of the earth, until, under the influence of sun and rain, it germinates and grows, so the three theological virtues at first lie dormant in the soul of the child until he attains the use of reason, and through the action of grace and

religious instruction they are developed and come to sight (in works). The baptized child resembles one who is asleep, who possesses the power of sight, but sees nothing, until he awakens from sleep and makes use of that power. So the power to exercise faith, hope, and charity are latent in the soul of the child, until with the use of reason they are brought into play, and their existence is made apparent.

4. We ought to make acts of the three theological virtues frequently in the course of our life, especially before approaching the sacraments and at the hour of death.

The means of making acts of the three theological virtues is to place before the mind the object and the motive of these virtues. In doing so, one may employ the usual formula prayers, and also express one's self in one's own words. Every time we make the sign of the cross, utter a prayer, or do a good deed, we make implicitly at least, an act of one or more of these virtues.†

The Rosary: Mary's Gift to All



The Rosary is cherished alike by the learned and the ignorant, by the priest and the layman, by the rich and the poor.

The Sovereign Pontiff derives from it supernatural strength to bear

his tremendous burden, and light and grace to discharge the duties of his exalted office with Christian fidelity; the priest finds in his Rosary solace and courage in the trials which beset him, and the grace to remain faithful to the superhuman obligation which he has voluntarily taken upon himself; the nun draws

from this wondrous devotion grace to persevere in the life of angelic purity which she has embraced in imitation of the Immaculate Virgin; the mother rises from the recitation of the chaplet with renewed strength to carry on her unselfish and even heroic life, it may be amidst suffering and poverty, on behalf of the tender children whom God has entrusted to her; the soldier on the battlefield communes with Mary on his beads, and knows full well that the Mother of God will bless and protect him in life and in death.

In fact, we cannot mention any class of persons who do not receive the most abundant graces and the sweetest consolation from this Heaven-sent devotion.†

We'd like to hear from YOU! Write or call:

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