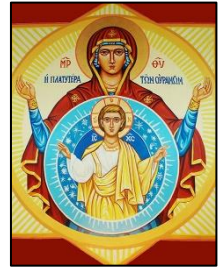


**ST. NICHOLAS OF MYRA**  
**BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
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 Served by: Rev. Stephen Casmus



**SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS**  
**Glory to Jesus Christ!**

**DEC 16, 2018**  
**Glory forever!**

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**DIVINE LITURGY**

Sunday 10:00 AM      Holydays 7:00 PM

Confession: Sunday 9:00-9:30 AM or by appointment

**Welcome to all visitors** to St. Nicholas Church. If you are new and wish to register as a parishioner, please see Fr. Stephen after the Divine Liturgy.

**Parish Membership**

The Family of Saint Nicholas of Myra is open to any Catholic, and to anyone:

- Who is interested in seeking the Lord Jesus Christ through His Word and Sacred Mysteries.
- Who accepts the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Who will help us form a community based on the Lord's love.
- Who is willing to grow as a Christian within the legitimate traditions of the Byzantine Catholic Church.
- Who acknowledges the authority of the Pope, Bishop and Pastor.
- Who will attend Liturgical Services on Sunday, and on the Great Holydays.
- Who is willing to support the growth of the Church by sharing their Time, Talent and Treasure.
- Who will participate in the yearly Eparchial Appeal

## THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

- SUN. DEC 16 -Sunday of the Forefathers  
 10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy  
 Col 3:4-11, Luke 14:16-24
- WED. DEC 05 -Boniface, Martyr  
 7:00 PM Emmanuel Moleben  
 James 1:1-18, Mark 10:11-16
- SUN. DEC 23 -Sunday before Christmas  
 10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy  
 Heb 11:9-10, & 32-40, Matthew 1:1-25
- MON. DEC 24 - Vigil of Christmas  
 10:00 AM—Royal Hours  
 5:00 Christmas Vigil Liturgy
- TUE. DEC 25 - Christmas Day – The Birth of Our Lord  
 10:00 AM –Divine Liturgy

**A Special thanks to Bishop John S. Pazak, C.Ss.R DD** for his visit to the parish last weekend. It was an honor and a privilege to have him here.

**PRAY FOR THE SICK & INFIRMED OF OUR PARISH & PARISHIONERS' RELATIVES:**

Paul Bruckler, Robert Gubany, Teresa Sandoval, Ron Cisneros, Ron Cisneros Jr. and Gloria Brissette.

**12/09/18 Attendance: 48**

**Parish Income:** Tithe -\$250.00, Donations -\$537.00, Fund Raiser - \$216.00, Retired Religious - \$105.00 **Total - \$1108.00**

**The Fontana Breakfast Lion's Club** hosts **BINGO** here at St. Nicholas on **Saturday evenings**. The kitchen has become a significant source of income for the parish. Please participate in this fundraising effort. It is a good opportunity to get to know your fellow parishioners. Many hands make light work, but currently there are few that regularly participate. Please sign up in the hall to ensure there are at least four working.

## The Angel of Great Counsel

Journey through salvation history to understand the pre-lenten seasons.

For Judeo-Christians of the first centuries, all salvation history hinged upon Jesus's identity as "Angel of Great Counsel" (LXX Isaiah 9:6). The Emmanuel Moleben celebrated in Byzantine churches takes its biblical inspiration from readings in the Byzantine lectionary (i.e. "the Apostolic reading" and Gospel). Byzantine Christians have an advantage of using the ancient Greek translation of Old Testament called "the Septuagint" (abbreviated LXX). This text is essential for understanding nearly every New Testament citation from the Jewish Bible. Even Jesus's Nativity is the fulfillment of the terms of prophecy from the Greek Bible.

To start, LXX Gen 3:15 mentioned the relatively strange prophecy that one day a woman would produce from her own seed (not Adam's!) a child who would crush the head of the serpent: "[o Satan,] I will put enmity between 'the woman' and her seed; He (the fruit of her loins) will watch [to strike] your head and you his heel." Otherwise, both Testaments are generally concerned with "male seed" or children of patriarchs' loins. In preparation for the Great Fast, I would like to journey with you through salvation history to understand the Pre-Lenten seasons as a dramatic anticipation of the Great and Holy Week and Pascha.

I warmly challenge my readers to pick up the Bible to accompany me down the prophetic journey that the Byzantine lectionary and hymns of the Divine Praises, preserving authentic interpretations of the olden prophecies of Jesus's coming.

Firstly, I recount the role of "the Angel of Lord" in the Old Testament. Before the Incarnation, Jesus was not yet flesh. However, after he had already come, he instructed the people that he'd already been around for eternity. Recall that "Angel of the Lord" is almost always 'code' for saying God-appearing-in-disguise. At creation, in Genesis 1:2-3, the Word of the Lord and his Spirit descended into a vault filled with water. By touching water, life came out. Note the Father "sending" out his Word and his Spirit cooperating with the Father's Word. This vault is strangely like a womb. In fact, Mary's womb admits two divine beings similarly to descend there to bring about a miraculous kind of life never before seen. Additionally, the Word of the Lord came to Noah (Genesis, chapters 5 to 6) in a command to him, like Yahweh commanding that creation be made earlier in Genesis. At God's word, Noah was inspired to send out a dove over water to confirm the

beginning of a new creation. Once we see Yahweh's pattern is to send his Word, which in turns sends his Spirit, then we see the entire pattern of God's action in the universe and in the sacraments, especially as noticed by the holy Fathers.

For today, this pattern allows us to arrive at Abraham's anticipation of a miraculous birth of some kind of angelic or heavenly being to save God's people. We begin at Genesis chapter 18. Abraham, as in Rublev's famous icon of the Trinity, encounters three humanlike angels, or are they? The sacred writer switches from referring to the angels in the singular, as Yahweh, then in the plural. Here, God hints at his incomprehensibility. Abraham sees three beings, Father, Son, and Spirit, anticipating the Story of St. Paul's Christian initiation, or process of baptism in Acts chapters 8 to 9.

When Abraham saw the Lord (three angels), he fell down prostrate, just like the conversion of Paul at the divine light of Jesus on the road to Damascus. Next, like the ceremony of Jesus at the Last Supper — signifying the baptism of the Apostles — Abraham washes the feet of the angels, for Jesus was himself baptized and ate the Last Supper. Finally, Abraham brings the angels three loaves of bread. So, too, Paul's conversion includes ritual washing and eating immediately following. We should notice that Jesus actually claimed that Abraham had actually seen Jesus "and was glad" (John 8:56). Jesus was quite serious.

Recall, Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to Abraham's Sarah who made three loaves (for the Father, Son, and Spirit): "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened" (Matthew 13:33). However, to understand Sarah's prefiguring of Mary and the Angel of Good Counsel born of her, we'll have to pick up on Genesis chapter 18 in the next installment!

by Father Christiaan Kappes,

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Academic Dean, Byzantine Catholic  
Seminary of SS. Cyril and Methodius

From: [www.archpitt.org/angel-great-counsel/](http://www.archpitt.org/angel-great-counsel/)