

## Rudolph Con't

made a song adaptation to Rudolph. Though the song was turned down by such popular vocalists as Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore, it was recorded by the singing cowboy, Gene Autry. "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was released in 1949 and became a phenomenal success, selling more records than any other Christmas song, with the exception of "White Christmas."

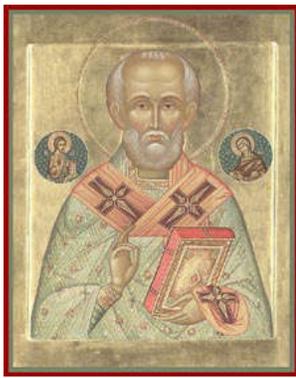
The gift of love that Bob May created for his daughter so long ago kept on returning back to bless him again and again. And Bob May learned the lesson, just like his dear friend Rudolph, that being different isn't so bad. In fact, being different can be a blessing.

### MERRY CHRISTMAS

*Enjoy life... it has an expiration date*

"Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you."

~Princess Diana



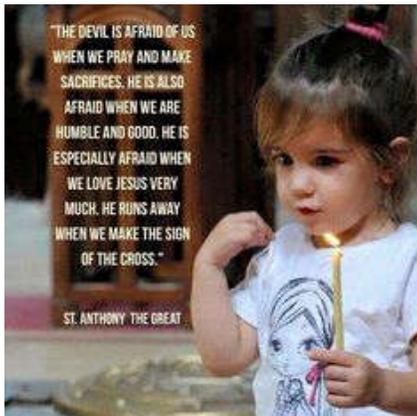
### St. Nicholas of Myra

Troparion — Tone 4

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence; your humility exalted you; your poverty enriched you. Hierarch Father Nicholas, entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion — Tone 3

You revealed yourself, O saint, in Myra as a priest, For you fulfilled the Gospel of Christ By giving up your soul for your people, And saving the innocent from death. Therefore you are blessed as one become wise in the grace of God.



## HOW TO FIND CHRISTMAS HAPPINESS and JOY

December is the time when we worry about Christmas gifts. Everyone seems to agree that we overdo this gift-giving stuff. Everyone seems to agree that it all has become too commercial and less spiritual. We read so many sermons and messages on the excesses of the season. What are we to do? How would we go about putting Christ back into Christmas? How do we make Christ the "reason for the season"? Or, is this really a problem at all?

This year, I'm for gift-giving. God gave us His gift: His only begotten Son. The Son gave us His gift of Himself. The Spirit brought us these gifts as His own gift for mankind. Why does God give? Because He loves us and because it is His nature to love and to give. If it is His nature to love and to give, and we know that we are created by Him in His own image and likeness, then it is our proper nature to love and to give. Christ gives Himself to God the Father and to mankind. We, too, need to give ourselves to God and to each other. To do otherwise would be to act and live in a way contrary to our very nature. Such living would cause dissonance and pain. It would cause depression, anxiety and discontentment. Whenever someone is not consistent with his own nature, he or she will feel such pain.

The solution seems to me to be very clear. Let's "give in" to our nature, and give ourselves to God and to each other. Let's give cheerfully and generously to God through His Church, and give to each other our time, caring and gifts. Let us indulge in sharing the love that God has for us and we have for each other, and let's do it abundantly. Let's overcome our fears. If we are short of cash, let's be creative. If we are short on time, let's fast from those activities that steal away our time and be with each other, instead of our televisions and computers. Let's live deliberately and joyfully, giving fully and generously. Nothing less will be from our nature, which is itself the Christmas gift from God.<sup>4</sup>

*Bishop John (Abdalah)*

*The Word Magazine - December 2011*

**Some thoughts on the Conception of the Theotokos by St. Anna (December 22):**

The Orthodox Church: 455 Questions and Answers by Stanley S. Harakas

**What is the concept in the Roman Catholic Church of the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception?**

This is a Roman Catholic dogma which holds that from the moment of her conception the Virgin Mary was kept free from all original sin. It became a doctrine requiring belief by all Roman Catholics under Pope Pious IX through a proclamation in 1854. It is not accepted by the Eastern Orthodox Church as a doctrine.

From the Orthodox point of view, there are several objectionable aspects of this doctrine which makes it unacceptable. The first is that traditional Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox views on original sin are quite different. The Roman Catholic view emphasizes guilt as the major aspect of original sin. The Eastern Orthodox view emphasizes the condition of separateness between all persons and God prior to the acceptance of the saving work of Christ. So, for the Roman Catholics, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is a way of saying that the Theotokos was guilty of no sin.

Eastern tradition tends to also hold that the Virgin Mary committed no voluntary sin, but this is different from saying that she was born without sin. Further, the Orthodox point out that if it were true that the Virgin Mary were born without sin it would not be true that all persons have need of salvation.

In addition, if it be held that the Immaculate Conception were needed so that Jesus was born without original sin, then this also would require that her parents Joachim and Anna were without original sin. This could logically be traced back to Adam and Eve, with the obvious result of negating the whole teaching regarding original sin.

The feast, however, of the Conception of the Theotokos, is known in the East from the 7th Century, but there is no evidence in the East for a belief that she was born without original sin. The conception of the Theotokos by St. Anna is celebrated in the Orthodox Church on December 22, and the feast of the Immaculate Conception is observed in the Roman Catholic Church on December 8. The birth of the Theotokos is celebrated on September 21.



**JESUS IS BETTER THAN SANTA**

Santa lives at the North Pole! **JESUS** is everywhere!

Santa rides in a sleigh! **JESUS** rides on the wind and walks on the water!

Santa comes but once a year! **JESUS** is an ever present help!

Santa fills your stockings with goodies! **JESUS** Supplies all your needs!

Santa comes down your chimney uninvited! **JESUS** stands at your door and knocks ...and then enters your heart!

You have to stand in line to see Santa! **JESUS** is as close as the mention of His name!

Santa lets you sit on his lap! **JESUS** lets you rest in His arms!

Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "hi little boy or girl, what's your name!" **JESUS** knew our name before we did. Not only does He know our name, He knows our address too. He knows our history and future and He even knows how many hairs are on our head!

Santa has a belly like a bowl full of Jelly! **JESUS** has a heart full of love!

All Santa can offer is Ho Ho Ho! **JESUS** offers health, help and hope!

Santa says, "you better not cry"! **JESUS** says, "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you!

Santa's little helpers make toys! **JESUS** makes new life, mends wounded hearts, Repairs broken homes and build mansions!

Santa may make you chuckle! But **JESUS** gives you joy that is your strength!

While Santa puts gifts under your tree! **JESUS** became our gift and died on the tree!

It's obvious there is really no comparison. We need to remember **WHO** Christmas is all about! We need to put **CHRIST** back in **CHRISTMAS!**

**JESUS IS STILL THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!**

**Calling All Ancestors of Christ to the Feast of His Nativity**  
*By Fr Dan Kovalak*

Twice the second Sunday before Christmas, and all through the temple Holy Ancestors of Jesus begin to assemble.

Their witness and love since the time of creation now bids them "rejoice" in this cosmic celebration.

Justified by faith, both the great and the least, now form a synaxis to partake of the feast.

Armed with God's invincible power they hasten in reverence to observe this hour.

With the hosts of heaven toward a manger of straw they sing of the wondrous fulfillment of the Law.

The prophets and patriarchs honor the perfection of their enduring efforts to announce our salvation

From their seed has blossomed the glorious fruit that enabled the Orthodox Church to take root.

The ancestors magnified among nations now see all prophecy reach its destination.

The three holy children from a furnace of fire escape without harm by the God they admire.

Prefiguring this present mystery they bear witness to One God in Trinity.

Untouched by the blazing fires of earth they profoundly testify to the Virgin Birth.

Daniel, the glorious, announced with a groan, "I see the Just Judge seated on a throne...

...A river of fire flowing from His feet" but the children of God can't be scorched by the heat.

Together with the ancestors, may we gather, too to render to God the worship He's due.

Come Adam and Enoch and Melchisedek Come join us along this Nativity trek.

Come Abraham, Isaac, and David the King, Join Moses and Aaron in caroling.

Come Jacob and Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah Ezekiel, Elijah, Joshua, Zachariah,

Baptist and Forerunner be present this day; you who announced "prepare ye the way".

And Most Blessed Mary; of this feast you are leaven, for your womb has become more spacious than heaven.

But what to our wondering ears should hear; a parable of a banquet that elicits some fear.

A king bids his subjects to speedily come to the marriage feast of His royal Son.

The table fully-laden, the best finery used, when all of a sudden, guests beg to be excused.

"I've bought oxen and land and can't come," some they say,  
"I've just married" said another, "I must stay away."

The king is not pleased with the "no shows", so then he sends his messengers out once again.

"Those first invited; their numbers too small, bring the blind and the lame to fill my banquet hall!"

Eventually the king's glorious feast was observed but not by those for whom it was reserved.

The message for us in the parable is clear: "In the fear of God and with faith, draw near."

Dearly beloved, we commemorate this day the ancestors of Christ Who paved the way;

the way to Bethlehem, the way to the Cross, the way that opens the door to the lost.

The ancestors, the banquet -- the lessons we hear provide the formula for a Happy New Year.

But before we unwrap the gift in the manger let's be sure, to Him we will not play the stranger.

May we accept the royal invitation and not excuse ourselves from HIS celebration.

None of the glories of Christmas will blossom unless we realize Whose birth is most awesome.

So we hear our priest as he turns back toward the east, Blessed Christmas to all and to all a JOYOUS FEAST!

**Annual Yolka  
Christmas Dinner & Celebration  
All Welcome**

hosted by

St. Pantelimon Orthodox Church  
7549 West 61st Place, Summit, IL  
Rectory: 708-552-5276



**When:**  
Sunday - January 8, 2017  
**Time:**  
Noon  
**Cost:**  
Free will offering  
**RSVP:** By January 4, 2017  
Karen M. 708-699-7497  
Fr. Andrew 708-552-5276



Roast Beef	Fried Chicken
Mashed Potatoes	Vegetables
Salad / Bread	Coffee / Tea / Desserts
Cash Bar	



St. Nicholas



D A R W O R A T E L E B R A C  
O E E D G R N O G S H O E S L  
S D C H R I S T M A S W A I E  
M I T E R D F D N I D T S X S  
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**Word List**  
NICHOLAS  
BISHOP  
SAINT  
GIFTGIVER  
WONDERWORKER  
MITER  
CROZIER  
BOOK  
COMPANIONS  
CHILDREN  
MIRACLES  
SHOES  
COOKIE  
WINTER  
ADVENT  
CELEBRATE  
DECEMBER  
SIX  
CHRISTMAS

