

## **Parish Prayer List (Living)**

*(Parish)*

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Rdr. George	JoAnn
Anthony	Paula	Kathleen	SJ
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Thomas	Gloria	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Sbdn. Jason	Silouan	Susan Mary
Sbdcn Maximus	Emilia	Photini	George
Magdalini	Constanka	Emil	John Howard
Barbara	John	Pam	Gracie
Olga	Marina	Seraphim	Maria
Sophia	Danny	Xenia	Evdokia
Nicholas	Mary	Rachel	Katherine
Lily	Theodora	Elizabeth	Joseph
Justine	David	Rdr. John	Kimberly
Matthew	George	Anna	Lukas
Julia	John L.	Lou	Marlene
James	Elizabeth		

*(non-Parish)*

Alexandra	Rachael	Thomas Pappas	Lillian Pappas
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige and Paul	Juan & Jennifer
Gabriella	Josiah	Jacob	Catherine
Anna	Andrew	Chris	Crystal
Ian	RoseJane	Gabriel	Marcia
Dale	Johannah	Lorrie	Brian
Hugh	Raymond	Judy	Mike
Ron	Clint	Peter	Maria
Michael	Timothy	Petrese	Mary
Joe	Sean	James	Michael
Sara	Ruth	Janet H.	Pam
Ana	Roz	Krista	Marty
Maria	Danny	Margo	Rob
Nancy	Kera	Vanessa	Emma

## **Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)**

Katina Pait (+12/9)

Mary Louise Blomeley (+12/10)

Josephine Urban (+12/15)

Dominick LoGalbo (+12/25)

## **Thoughts from the Fathers**

But He was a Baby. He was a Child, so that ye may be a perfect man; He was wrapped in swaddling clothes that ye may be loosed from the snares of death (Ps. 17:5, 6). He was in a manger, so that ye may be in the Altar; He on earth, the ye may be in the stars. He had no other place in the inn, so that ye may have many mansions in the heavens (Jn. 14:2; Eph 2:6). “He,” it says, “being rich, became

poor for your sake, that through His poverty ye might be rich” (2 Cor 8:9). Therefore, His poverty is my inheritance, and the Lord’s weakness is my virtue. He chose lack for Himself, that He may abound for all. ~ *Saint Ambrose of Milan*

Magic arts also were taught among them, and oracles in sundry places led men astray, and the cause of everything in human life was traced to the stars, as though nothing existed but that which could be seen. In a word, impiety and lawlessness were everywhere and neither God nor His Word was known. Yet He had not hidden Himself from the sight of men, nor given the knowledge of Himself in one way only; but rather unfolded it in many forms and by many ways. ~ *Saint Athanasius, “The Divine Dilemma and its Solution in the Incarnation,” Chapter Three, ” On the Incarnation*

The Lord will not abandon us if we always approach Him from the heart. He wants our hearts and our souls to burn with an even greater desire and longing for Him, that we may never fall away from Him and His love. ~ *Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica*

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**St. Nicholas, Santa Claus, and the Nativity: An Interview with Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev)(from Pravmir.com)**

*Ivan Semenov: Vladyka, St. Nicholas is often referred to outside of Russia as a Russian saint. Russian Orthodox people consider him a special patron saint of Russia and pray especially to him.*

*Nonetheless, St. Nicholas not only was never in Russia, but Russia as such did not exist in his time. How so?*

**Metropolitan Hilarion:** St. Nicholas was the bishop of the city of Myra in Lycia (today this city is called Demre and is located in Turkey) and lived in the fourth century. Surprisingly little historical information has been preserved about him. But it is striking that this saint has been so venerated by the Church over the course of the centuries that in Russia, for example, he became the most venerated saint. There were more churches dedicated to St. Nicholas than anywhere else. This is due to the special veneration of St. Nicholas in Russia and in ancient Rus’. This veneration came about for no other reason than that St. Nicholas played some sort of very significant role in the lives and spiritual experiences of hundreds, thousands, and millions of people. That is, people prayed to him and received an answer to these prayers. People addressed him for help, and miracles were performed. It is known, for instance, that St. Nicholas helped many people in distress at sea. He is traditionally

seen as the patron saint of sailors. He generally helps people who are travelling. This is the experience not only of people in ancient times, but of modern people as well. Go into any Orthodox parish and ask people who have come to the service: how has St. Nicholas helped you and why is he so dear to you? And nearly everyone will likely relate some story from his or her life connected with the help and heavenly intercession of St. Nicholas. There are many such stories.

**Ivan Semenov:** *Vladyka, the Catholic Church has begun to doubt the historicity of the saint because of the opinion that two separate historical figures were conflated in his life. How does the Russian Orthodox Church view such research?*

**Metropolitan Hilarion:** I would say this in response: every saint lives, as it were, three lives. The first was the real life that he led on earth in a given historical period of time. Sometimes we know a great deal about this life, and sometimes we know very little. Another life of the saint is his hagiography. It is good if people who knew him, who could relate the real details of his life in this hagiography, wrote this.

Very often a life is written many centuries later and then, in fact, the life is written like an icon. That is, the life is not a verbal portrait, but rather a verbal icon of the saint. Very often the life might consist of certain stories that are common for several saints that migrate from one life to another. Therefore one should not treat these lives as entirely reliable historical sources. In just the same way we do not look at an icon as a human portrait. An icon is a certain verbal, symbolic image.

The third life of a saint is his life as experienced by those people who address him in prayer over the course of centuries. This is a very real life of the saint that we can feel through our experience. Therefore, when we are told that a saint such as St. Nicholas never existed, but we know that precisely this person, precisely this saint, has helped us many times in life – then the conversation about whether he might not have existed is for us entirely baseless. The Church's experience is no less important than any historical or archeological evidence.

**Ivan Semenov:** *Yes, certainly anyone who has at least some spiritual experience will value this as more important than anything else.*

**Metropolitan Hilarion:** You know, during the Soviet era we were taught that Jesus Christ never actually existed. Meanwhile, thousands and millions of people come to Christ not as some kind of ghost or phantom, but encounter the real live person of Christ; they commune with Him in prayer; they, if you will, know Him personally. They know Him by personal experience, they meet with Him, and they commune with Him. Their communion with Christ may be the very essence of their lives. One may say

the same thing about the saints. Historical evidence may be more or less reliable. There are also lives of saints written by their disciples. Then this life is, in fact, a biography.

**Ivan Semenov:** *Unfortunately, in the majority of Western languages there is no meaning relating to a birth in the word "Nativity." The word "Christmas" does not include the idea of someone being born.*

**Metropolitan Hilarion:** But all the same it points to Christ. Nonetheless, often this Western, commercialized, secularized Nativity is entirely devoid of any Christian component. The same thing happened with St. Nicholas. After all, this is one of those saints that is loved not only by adults, but also especially by children. So the tradition developed that St. Nicholas gives children presents on New Year's Day. Gradually this Christian component, this understanding that St. Nicholas was a Christian bishop and ascetic, disappeared and one was left with the figure of this Santa Claus, who is no different from our own Uncle Frost.

**Ivan Semenov:** *In this regard, our viewers ask: "Should we have children believe that in Russia there is no such thing as Santa Claus, that instead we have Uncle Frost? What do you think?"*

**Metropolitan Hilarion:** Well, it seems to me that there should always be some element of fairy tales in childhood. If children grow up (seeing only serious programs) then they will be deprived of an essential component of a truly human upbringing. Fairy tales are an essential part of childhood. Therefore the element of fantasy should always be preserved, and with age people will understand perfectly well which characters are real and which are fantasy.

**Ivan Semenov:** *Our viewer Pauline asks the following question about St. Nicholas: "In what cases should one pray to this saint? When can he be of more help to others?"*

**Metropolitan Hilarion:** I think that one can pray to St. Nicholas in all cases. I, at any rate, have often turned to him in various situations and received help. I can cite a simple example. My priestly ministry began in very poor areas of Lithuania, where I had four parishes that were not connected by any means of public transportation. Of course, then I had neither my own car nor even my own horse and cart in order to travel. In order to make it from one parish to another to perform the Liturgy, I had to travel seventy kilometers [43.5 miles] either by foot or by hitchhiking. It would happen that I'd be walking and walking – and one car would go by, then a second, and a third, and a fourth, and a fifth, with no one stopping. Then I would begin to pray to St. Nicholas, and some car would be sure to stop. Of course, one could say that this was all a coincidence. But this happened so often, and in so many different situations, that I could never claim to anyone that this was all just a coincidence. But there have been other cases when St. Nicholas really saved people from danger, or even from death.