

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

Metropolitan Nicholas	Sharon	Bob	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Joretta
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Kristi
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Andrea & Kirby
Nanette	Michael	Tatiana	Rachael
Michael	Helen	Susan K	

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

Nicholas Georgopoulos (+11/3)

Betty Pilja (+12/6)

Mary Louise Blomeley (+12/10)

Josephine Urban (+12/21)

## **Thoughts from the Fathers**

Behold, O Bethlehem!

David the King clothes himself in fine white linen.

The Lord of David

and Son of David hid His glory

in swaddling clothes. His swaddling clothes gave

a robe of glory to human beings.

On this day our Lord exchanged  
radiance for shame, as the Humble One.

For Adam exchanged truth for evil

as a rebel. The Gracious One took pity;

His upright deeds conquered those of the wicked one.

*from Hymn 5 on the Nativity*

*St. Ephrem the Syrian, 4th century*

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**Sainted Spyridon of Trimyphunteia (+348)** was born towards the end of the III Century on the island of Cyprus. The accounts have preserved little about his life. But it is known, that he was a shepherd, and had a wife and children. He used all his substance for the needs of his neighbours and the homeless, for which the Lord rewarded him with a gift of wonderworking: he healed the incurably sick and cast out devils. After the death of his wife, during the reign of Constantine the Great (306-337), they ordained him bishop of the Cypriot city of Trimyphunteia. Even with the dignity of bishop the saint did not change his manner of life, combining pastoral service with deeds of charity. According to the witness of Church historians, Saint Spyridon in the year 325 participated in the sessions of the First OEcumenical Council. At the Council, the saint entered into a dispute with a Greek philosopher, who was defending the Arian

heresy. The plain direct speaking of Saint Spyridon showed everyone the impotence of human wisdom afront Divine Wisdom: "Listen, philosopher, to what I tell thee: we believe, that the Almighty God from out of nothing did create by His Word and His Spirit both heaven and earth, and all the world both visible and invisible. The Word is the Son of God, Who didst come down upon the earth on account of our sins; he wast born of a Virgin, He lived amongst mankind, and suffered and died for our salvation, and then He arose, having redeemed by His sufferings the Original Sin, and He hath resurrected with Him the human race. We believe, that He is One in Essence and Equal-in-Dignity with the Father, and we believe this without any sly rationalisations, since it is impossible to grasp this mystery by human reason". As a result of their discussion, the opponent of Christianity became the saint's zealous defender and later accepted holy Baptism. And after his conversation with Saint Spyridon, turning towards his companions, the philosopher said: "Listen! While the disputation with me was conducted by means of argued proofs, I could set forth to certain proofs other proofs, and by the very art of debate I could refute anything, that others might propose. But when, instead of proofs from reason, there began to issue forth from the mouth of this elder some sort of especial power, and the rational proofs became powerless against it, since it is impossible that man can withstand God. If any of you should come to think as I now indeed do, let him believe in Christ and together with me follow this elder, from whose lips doth speak God Himself". At this Council, Saint Spyridon displayed a proof in evidence of the Oneness within the Holy Trinity. He took in his hand a brick and he grasped it -- for an instant fire emerged from it upwards, water flowed downwards, and there remained clay in the hands of the wonderworker. "There are these three elements, but one tile (brick), - - and Saint Spyridon then said, -- suchlike also the Holy Trinity: Three Persons, but One God".

The saint concerned himself about his flock with great love. Through his prayer, drought was replaced by abundant life-producing rains, and otherwise incessant rains were replaced by fair weather. And likewise through his prayer the sick were healed and demons cast out. One time a woman came up to him with a dead child in her arms, imploring the intercession of the saint. He prayed, and the infant was restored to life. The mother, overcome with joy, collapsed lifeless. Through the prayer of the saint of God the mother was restored to life. Another time, hastening to save his friend, falsely-accused and sentenced to death, the saint was hindered on his way by the unanticipated flooding of a watery brook. The saint

commanded the freshet: "Halt! For thus biddeth thee the Lord of all the world, that I might cross over and a man be saved, on account of whom be my haste". The will of the saint was fulfilled, and he crossed over happily to the other shore. The judge, apprised of the miracle that had occurred, received Saint Spyridon with esteem and set free his friend.

Similar instances are known from the life of the saint. One time he went into an empty church, he gave orders to light up the lampadas and candles, and then he began the Divine-services. Intoning the "Peace be unto all", both he and the deacon heard in reply from above the resounding of "a great multitude of voices, proclaiming: "And with thine spirit". This choir was majestic and more sweetly melodious than any human choir. To each ectenia-petition of the litanies, the invisible choir sang "Lord, have mercy". Attracted by the church singing wafting forth, the people situated nearby hastened towards it. And as they got closer and closer to the church, the wondrous singing all more and more filled the ears and gladdened their hearts. But when they entered into the church, they saw no one besides the bishop and several church servers, nor did they hear any moreso the church singing, by which they were greatly astonished".

Saint Simeon Metaphrastes, the author of his Life, likened Saint Spyridon to the Patriarch Abraham in his virtue of hospitality. "This also must needs be known, how he received strangers", -- wrote that insider of the monastic circles, Sozomen, who in his "Church History" offers an amazing example from the life of the saint. One time, at the onset of the Forty-day Great Lent a stranger knocked at his door. Seeing that the traveller was very exhausted, Saint Spyridon said to his daughter: "Wash the feet of this man, that he may recline to dine". But with it being Lent there were none of the necessary provisions, since the saint "partook of food only on set days, and on other days he went without food". His daughter therefore answered, that in the house there was neither bread, nor even flour. Then Saint Spyridon, apologising to his guest, ordered his daughter to roast a salted ham in the food-provisions, and having seated the stranger at table, he began to dine, "urging that man to do likewise. When the latter refused, calling himself a Christian, the saint rejoined: "It be no less proper to refuse this, since the Word of God hath proclaimed: "All is pure to the pure" (Tit. 1: 15)".

Another historical detail, reported by Sozomen, was likewise exceedingly characteristic of the saint: he had the custom to distribute one part of the gathered harvest to the destitute, and another portion to those having need while in debt. For himself

personally he did not take a portion, but simply showed the entrance to his supply-room, where each could take as much as was needed, and thereafter make a return in like manner, without controls or accountings.

There is also the tale by Sokrates Scholastikos about how robbers planned to steal the sheep of Saint Spyridon: in the deep of night they broke into the sheepfold, but here by some invisible power they found themselves all tied up. With the onset of morning the saint went to his flock, and seeing the tied-up robbers, he prayed and untied them and for a long while he upbraided them to leave off from their path of iniquity and earn a livelihood by respectable work. "Then, having made them a present of a sheep and sending them off, the saint said kindly: "Be ye not vigilant in vain".

They often likened Saint Spyridon to the Prophet Elias (Elijah or Ilias), since it was through his prayer during the times of drought that frequently threatened the island of Cyprus, that rain occurred: "Let us view the Angelic-equal Spyridon the Wonderworker. Formerly did the land suffer exceedingly from want of rain and drought: there was famine and pestilence and a great many of the people were stricken, but through the prayers of the saint there did descend rain from the heavens upon the earth: wherefore the people delivered from woe gratefully do proclaim: Hail, thou in semblance to the great prophet, in that the rain driving off famine and malady in good time is come down".

All the Vitae (Lives) of the saint are striking in the amazing simplicity and powerful wonderworking, granted him by God. Through a word of the saint the dead were awakened, the elements of nature tamed, the idols smashed. At one point at Alexandria, a Council had been convened by the Patriarch in regard to the idols and pagan temples there, and through the prayers of the fathers of the Council all the idols fell down, except one -- which was very much revered. It was revealed to the Patriarch in a vision that this idol remained to be shattered by Saint Spyridon of Trimyphunteia. Invited by the Council, the saint set sail on a ship, and at the moment the ship touched shore and the saint stepped out on land, the idol in Alexandria with all its offerings turned to dust, which then was announced to the Patriarch and all the bishops gathered round Saint Spyridon.

Saint Spyridon lived his earthly life in righteousness and sanctity, and in prayer he offered up his soul to the Lord (+ c. 348).

In the history of the Church, Sainted Spyridon is venerated together with Sainted Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia. His relics repose on the island of Corfu, in a church named after him.