

Feast of St. Nicholas of Tolentine

Sir 2:1-9

Ps 16:1-2,5-6,7-9

II Cor 9:6-11

Lk 10:1-11

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Nicholas: a name translated from Greek which means, AVictory for the People@. On September 10, 1245 there was a child named Nicholas born in Italy into the Garrutti Family. A small town by the title of St. Angelo in Pontano would be the birthplace of a boy destined to be a true Avictor for his people@. After living 60 years, he died on Sept. 10, 1305 having lived and served for 30 years in Tolentino, Italy as a faithful Augustinian Priest.

If we were to explore the life of this humble Man of God, we would receive great insight as to why so many people were drawn to him not only in his lifetime, but, even more so after his death. As Catholics, we refer to Saints as ordinary Christians who lived extraordinary Christian lives. They make the light of Christ shine brightly in the darkness of sin and evil by their life of love and by their generous Christian attitude.

Thus it was with St. Nicholas of Tolentine. One of his fellow Augustinians described him in this way:

He was a joy to those who were sad, a consolation to the suffering, peace to those at variance, refreshment to those who toiled, support for the poor, and a healing balm for prisoners.

This Augustinian simply summarizes in a few words this giant of a man, not only for 700 years ago, but, for the world and Church of today. Saint Nicholas highlights most of the essential points of a good Christian life for all Christians to imitate in their struggle to grow in holiness or sainthood.

To really appreciate this great Augustinian Saint, we need only focus in on his life as a Christian, Religious and Priest.

St .Nicholas was a *prayerful man*. Any true person of God needs to pray often and fervently. St. Nicholas was a man of prayer not only for his own

spiritual life, but, also for others especially for those who died. He practiced great penitential prayer and mortifications battling daily the attacks of the devil. His prayer was often directed to the intercession of the Blessed Mother to whom he had great devotion. It is noted that he fasted in prayer for 30 years consuming only soup, bread and water.

St. Nicholas served the *needs of the poor*. He generously cared for the Christ around him in the poor and abandoned. He gave from his own store, sacrificing so others would not go hungry. He also often took from the kitchen of the Monastery to feed the poor of Tolentino. It is said that once when he was taking food for his poor, when caught by the Prior, the food turned into roses.

St. Nicholas was known as the Patron of the *Holy Souls in Purgatory*. He prayed and celebrated Mass to save those suffering the pains of Purgatory. There are stories of those who had died who came to him and asked for his prayer and Masses so they could be released from Purgatory. St. Nicholas interceded for them so they could enjoy the happiness of heaven. It is reported that a star would appear in the Chapel each time St. Nicholas would Celebrate the Mass. Today, images of St. Nicholas are shown with a star on his breast.

St. Nicholas *healed the sick and dying*. Once again, we can see how St. Nicholas saw the suffering Christ in those who were ill, in pain and near death. With the help of the Blessed Mother and St. Augustine, he was given a remedy in his own illness and used that Blessed Bread to heal others. This tradition is continued today with the Blessed Bread of St. Nicholas.

He was an *evangelizer*. St. Nicholas sought out those who were away from the Church. He consoled them and reconciled them so they would return to the Church and their faith. He taught them to live a moral life at a time of moral decay. He preached the Word of God offering salvation to all.

St. Nicholas worked to *reconcile factions* among the people of Tolentino. He reunited people and families who were at odds with one another. From anger, friction, quarrels, and feuds Nicholas brought about peaceful conclusions.

Finally, he was a *man of great charity*. This virtue summarizes his whole life and good works as a Religious, Priest, Saint and man. He fulfilled the scripture challenge to *Let your attitude be that of Christ*. Nicholas based his whole response to God on the belief of Charity in all things. The love of his God was truly lived through the love of his fellow man and woman.

St. Nicholas was surely a victory for the people. This short look at his life shows us how God chose this man to bring about the victory of the Cross to the people with whom he lived and worked. Our world and times are not much

different from that of St. Nicholas. It is our Christian duty and responsibility to imitate his virtues and good works so we too can grow in holiness on our pilgrimage through life and support others in their journey.

As we continue our celebration of the Eucharist, which St. Nicholas loved and celebrated, we seek the same spiritual strength he found in the Bread of Life so we can strive to become saints by living ordinary lives in an extraordinary Christian way. St. Nicholas of Tolentine, pray for us and especially for our dearly beloved deceased relatives and friends.