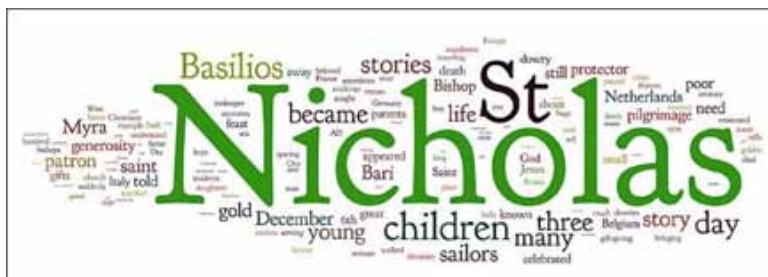


Weekly Musing † December 5, 2011

Saint Nicholas: Life & Miracles (2003) - Alexander Boguslawski

St. Nicholas, who you remember lived in the fourth century, was venerated as a saint rather early on. Two centuries after his death, the great prophet Mohammed was born and so began Islam. A few hundred more years and Crusaders from Europe tried to retake parts of the “Holy Land” (including Asia Minor where Myra is located) back from the Muslims. During a battle in the crusades, some Italian sailors went to the monastery where St. Nicholas’ remains were entombed. Over the protestations of the monks they took them to Bari, Italy, allegedly to save them from the Muslim invaders. There in Bari Italy the relics of the blessed saint remain.



The original tomb of St. Nicholas in Myra. Notice that the bottom has been broken out.

The shrine in Bari, Italy



The modern picture we have of “Santa Claus” actually has a remnant or two of the real St. Nicholas. His floppy hat, of course, is a western bishop’s mitre of a certain period (the western mitres originally were low and had two peaks, not one). Of course he was an eastern bishop who never wore a mitre (eastern bishops still do not) but never mind. One can be simply too picky.



This is my grandson Logan in a Christmas parade wearing a Santa hat which is just his size.

Logan sporting a Santa hat.

San Nicola by Anna Maria Di Terlizzi (Bari, Italy -2006)

The popularity of St. Nicholas is truly remarkable. He was indeed an historical figure but he left no writings. His legends, many of them very obviously fantastic,

sprouted up quickly, giving him the name “Wonder Worker” or “Miracle Worker” in the eastern Christianity. I find it amazing that a saint clear from Asia Minor should be commemorated on lead tokens in Tudor England. No doubt the English of the time had little idea of the real St. Nicholas as indeed most modern Americans have little idea about the real St. Nicholas. Still, there is something very enduring here that crossed great frontiers of time, space, and culture, and is very much alive today. As I said in my children’s sermon this last Sunday, in a time when we seem to adulate wealth, here is a man who had none. In a time when we are increasingly dismissive of the poor and those who are not successful by middle class standards, St. Nicholas put them at the center of who he was and what he did. He is indeed a saint for modern times. I conclude with this modern artwork which I particularly like. It shows St. Nicholas on a desert proceeded by three golden balls (representing his three bags of gold he gave to the three maidens as dowries). Our gifts given in the name of God lead us on.

News from St. Luke’s

Thanks to all of you who have returned your pledge cards. I always like having the offering plate left on the altar during church. For most of us this is not investment income (though that is most certainly welcome) but the results of our life’s labors. It is important. The tendency which some have to say that money doesn’t matter much, fail to understand ours is an incarnate religion, one that comes in the flesh, and these things do very much matter.



Don’t forget the ECW bake sale this weekend. The gals will be selling baked goods before and after all of our weekend services. This is an important funding source for their many outreach projects.

Don’t forget our Annual Christmas Pageant and dinner this coming Sunday at 6 pm. If possible make reservations by calling the church office at 252-7186. The program starts in the church and then we adjourn to Cardwell Hall for an above average dinner, catered this year by chief chef Tim Pray.

Senior High hosts their Madrigal Dinner here at St. Luke’s on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of this week (Dec. 8,9,10). Tickets are available through the choir office at Senior High. The youth group meets as usual this week but there will be no Wednesday Eucharist as the rector will be gone.

I am involved with the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. Every December 6, the feast of St. Nicholas, who is of course an eastern saint, we remember the diocese of Jerusalem or Jesus’ kin as I like to think of them. Their website is instructive about the useful work of the diocese which includes many organizations that work with children. Here is their website: <http://www.afedj.org>



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