

THE LIFE AND MIRACLES OF SAINT NICHOLAS

FROM THE *GOLDEN LEGEND* OF BLESSED JAMES OF VARAZZE



VITA ET MIRACULA SANCTI NICOLAI

EX *LEGENDA AUREA* BEATI JACOBI DE VORAGINE

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NICOLAUS dicitur a νῖκος, quod est victoria, et λαός, quod est populus, id est Nicolaus, quasi victoria populi, i.e. vitiorum quae et popularia et vilia sunt; vel victoria proprie, quia multos populos vita et doctrina docuit vitia et peccata vincere. Vel Nicolaus dicitur a νῖκος, quod est victoria, et *laus*, quasi victoriosa laus; vel a *nitor* et λαός, quod est populus, quasi nitor populi. Habuit enim in se ea, quae nitorem et munditiam faciunt. Nam secundum Ambrosium mundat sermo divinus, mundat vera confessio, mundat sancta cogitatio, mundat bona operatio. Ejus legendam doctores Argolici conscripserunt. Est autem Argos secundum Isidorum civitas Graeciae, unde Argolici Graeci vocantur. Alibi quoque legitur, quod Methodius Patriarcha eam Graece conscripsit, quam Johannes Diaconus in Latinum transtulit et plura addidit.

I

NICOLAUS civis Patarae urbis ex divitibus et sanctis parentibus originem duxit. Pater ejus Epiphanes, mater vero Johanna dicta est. Quem cum primaevio juvenutis suae flore parentes genuissent, deinceps caelibem vitam duxerunt. Hic prima die, dum balnearetur, erectus stetit in pelvi. Insuper quarta et sexta feria tantum semel sugebat ubera. Factus autem juvenis aliorum devitans lascivias ecclesiarum potius terebat limina et quidquid ibi de sacra scriptura intellegere poterat, memoriter retinebat. Parentibus vero suis defunctis cogitare coepit, qualiter tantam divitiarum copiam non ad laudem humanam, sed ad Dei gloriam dispensaret.

Tunc quidam contermineus suus satis nobilis tres filias ob inopiam prostituere cogitur, ut sic infami earum commercio aleretur. Quod ubi sanctus comperit, scelus abhorruit et massam auri panno involutam in domum ejus per fenestram nocte clam jecit et clam recessit. Mane autem surgens homo massam auri reperit et Deo gratiam agens primogenitae nuptias celebravit. Non multo post tempore Dei famulus simile peregit opus. Quod rursus ille reperiens et in laudes immensas prorumpens de caetero vigilare proposuit, ut sciret, quis esset, qui suae inopiae subvenisset. Post paucos etiam dies duplicatam auri massam in domum projecit, ad cujus sonitum ille excitatur et Nicolaum fugientem insequitur talique voce alloquitur: "Siste gradum teque aspectui ne subtrahas meol!"

NICHOLAS, the name, is said to come from *nikos*, which is "victory," and *laos*, which is "the people." Hence, Nicholas is the "victory of the people," i.e. victory over the base sins of the people. Or it means victory in the sense that by his life and his teachings he taught many peoples how to conquer vice and sin. Or it comes from *nikos*, "victory," and *laus*, "praise," meaning "victorious praise." Or from *nitor*, "brightness," and *laos*, "the people," meaning "brightness of the people," for he had in him that which brightens and purifies. For according to Saint Ambrose, the divine word is cleansing, true confession is cleansing, holy contemplation is cleansing, and good works are cleansing. His legend was written by the Argolic Doctors. Argos, according to Saint Isidore, is the city of Greece from which the name Argolics comes, meaning Greeks. Others say that Patriarch Methodius wrote it in Greek, and that John the Deacon translated it into Latin and added many things.

1

NICHOLAS, a citizen of Patara, was born to rich and holy parents. His father was Epiphanes, and his mother was called Joanna. He was conceived in the first flower of their youth, and thereafter they led a life of continence. On the first day as he was being bathed he stood upright in the basin. Furthermore on Wednesdays and Fridays he would accept the breast only once. As a young man he avoided the wantonness of others, preferring to frequent the churches, and there he would retain in his memory all the Holy Scripture that he was able to understand. After his parents died he began to consider how to distribute their great wealth, not so as to gain the praise of men, but for the glory of God.

Now it happened that his neighbour, of noble birth but fallen into poverty, had three daughters whom he was constrained to prostitute that he might survive by their shameful commerce. When the saint learned of this, he was horrified by the crime. He wrapped a lump of gold in a cloth, secretly tossed it through the window during the night, and withdrew unseen. When the man arose the next morning he found the lump of gold and giving thanks to God he celebrated the wedding of his firstborn daughter. Not long after this the servant of God performed a similar deed. The man again found the gold and burst into lavish praises of God, proposing to keep watch from now on to discover who had saved him from his poverty. A few days later he threw in a double lump of gold, the sound of which awakened the man. He pursued the fleeing Nicholas, saying to him, "Stop and let me see you!"

Sicque accurrens velocius Nicolaum hunc esse cognovit. Mox humi prostratus osculari volebat pedes ejus, quod ille refutans ab eo exegit, ne eum, quamdiu viveret, publicaret.

II

POST hoc Myrae civitatis defuncto episcopo conveniunt episcopi, illi ecclesiae de episcopo provisuri. Aderat autem inter eos quidam magnae auctoritatis episcopus, ad cuius electionem omnium sententia dependebat. Cum igitur cunctos jejuniis et orationibus insistere monuisset, nocte illa vocem audivit dicentem sibi, ut hora matutina fores ecclesiae observaret et, quem primum ad ecclesiam, cuius etiam nomen esset Nicolaus, venire conspiceret, ipsum in episcopum consecraret. Hoc ergo aliis revelans episcopis admonuit, ut omnes orationibus insisterent et ipse pro foribus excubaret. Mirum in modum in hora matutinali quasi a Deo missus ante omnes se agebat Nicolaus, quem apprehendens episcopus dixit ei: “Quod tibi nomen est?”

Ille ut erat columbina simplicitate plenus, inclinato capite: “Nicolaus,” inquit, “vestrae sanctitatis servus.”

Quem in ecclesiam ducentes licet plurimum renitentem in cathedram collocarunt. Ipse autem eandem quam prius humilitatem et morum gravitatem in omnibus sectabatur, in oratione pervigilabat, corpus macerabat, mulierum consortia fugiebat, humilis erat in omnes suscipiendo, efficax in loquendo, alacer in exhortando, severus in corripiendo. Fertur quoque sicut legitur in chronica quadam Nicolaum Nicaeno interfuisse Concilio.

III

QUADAM autem die dum quidam nautae periclitarentur, ita cum lacrimis oraverunt: “Nicolae, famule Dei, si vera sunt, quae de te audimus, nunc ea experiamur!”

Mox quidam in ejus similitudinem apparuit dicens: “Ecce assum. Vocastis enim me.”

Et coepit eos in antennis et rudentibus aliisque juvare navis armamentis, statimque cessavit tempestas. Cum autem ad ejus ecclesiam venissent, quem numquam ante viderant, sine indice cognoverunt. Tunc Deo et sibi de liberatione gratias egerunt. Quod ille divinae misericordiae et eorum fidei, non suis meritis attribuire docuit.

Running faster, he recognized Nicholas. Immediately prostrating himself, he wished to kiss Nicholas’ feet, but Nicholas refused him and demanded that he never reveal him as long as he lived.

2

AFTER this, the bishop of Myra died, and the bishops convened to appoint a new bishop for that church. There was one among them, a bishop of great authority, on whose choice the opinions of all depended. Having admonished them all to fast and pray, that night he heard a voice telling him that at the hour of Mattins he should watch the doors of the church, and that he should consecrate as bishop the first man to arrive there who would have the name Nicholas. Revealing this to the other bishops, he told them to be diligent in their prayers, and that he himself would keep vigil at the doors. In a marvelous way, at the hour of Mattins as though sent by God, Nicholas was there before them all. The bishop took hold of him and said, “What is your name?”

Full of dove-like simplicity, and head bowed, he replied, “Nicholas, your holiness’ servant.”

And they led him into the church and seated him on the throne, though he resisted greatly. And he acted in all things with the same humility and gravity of manner as he had shown before. He prayed through the night, mortified his body, and shunned the company of women. He looked up to all in humility. He was effective in speech, lively in exhortation, and severe in correcting. It is also stated in a chronicle that Nicholas participated in the Council of Nicaea.

3

ONE day some sailors who were about to perish at sea tearfully prayed, “Nicholas, servant of God, if the things we have heard of you are true, let us have proof of them now!”

And at once a man of his likeness appeared and said, “Here I am, for you have called me.”

And he began to help them with the sails and ropes and other ship’s equipment, and at once the storm ended. But when they came to his church, they recognized him whom they had not seen before, without being told who he was. Then they offered thanks to God and to him for their deliverance. He instructed them to attribute it to God’s mercy and to their faith, and not to any merit of his.

IV

QUODAM tempore totam provinciam Sancti Nicolai famis valida perculit, ita ut omnibus deficerent alimenta. Audiens autem vir Dei naves onustas tritico portui applicasse, illuc statim proficiscitur rogans nautas, ut saltem in centum modiis per quamlibet navem fame periclitantibus subvenirent. Cui illi: “Non audemus, Pater, quia mensuratum est Alexandriae, oportet in horrea imperatoris nos reddere.”

Quibus sanctus dixit: “Facite nunc quod dico, et vobis in Dei virtute promitto, quod nullam minorationem habebitis apud regium exactorem.”

Quod cum fecissent, et eandem mensuram, quam Alexandriae acceperant, reddidissent ministris imperatoris, miraculum referunt et Deum in suo famulo magnifica laude attollunt. Frumentum autem secundum uniuscujusque indigentiam vir Dei distribuit, ita ut miraculose duobus annis non tantum ad victum sufficeret, sed etiam ad usum seminis abundaret.

V

CUM autem regio illa idolis deservisset, prae caeteris nefandae Dianae simulacrum populus coluerat adeo, ut usque ad tempus viri Dei nonnulli rustici praedictae religioni execrabili deservirent ac sub quadam arbore consecrata Dianae quosdam ritus gentilium exercerent. Ac vir Dei praedictum ritum de omnibus finibus expulit ipsamque arborem praecidi mandavit. Iratus ex hoc contra eum hostis antiquus oleum Mydyatum, quod contra naturam in aqua et lapidibus ardet, confecit. Sequae in formam religiosae feminae transfigurans quibusdam ad virum Dei navigantibus in quadam sagenula obviavit. Sicque affata est eos: “Mallem ad sanctum Dei venire vobiscum sed nequeo. Rogo ergo vos, ut hoc oleum ad ejus ecclesiam offeratis et ob mei memoriam exinde aulae ejus parietes liniatis.”

Et statim evanuit. Et ecce aliam cernunt naviculam cum honestis personis, inter quos erat simillimus Sancto Nicolao, qui sic ait illis: “Heu quid mulier illa locuta est vobis vel quid attulit?”

Illi autem cuncta per ordinem narraverunt. Quibus ille: “Haec est impudica Diana, et ut me verum dicere comprobetis, oleum illud in mare projicite.”

Quibus projicientibus, ingens ignis in mari succenditur et contra naturam diutius in mari ardens conspicitur. Venientes igitur ad servum Dei aiebant: “Vere tu es ille, qui nobis in mari apparuisti et a diaboli insidiis liberasti.”

4

ONCE upon a time a great famine struck the whole of Saint Nicholas' province, such that all were short of food. The man of God, hearing that ships loaded with wheat had arrived at the port, headed there immediately, begging the sailors to rescue the suffering with at least a hundred pecks of wheat from each ship. They replied, “We do not dare, Father, since it was measured at Alexandria, and we must deliver it to the emperor's granaries.”

The saint said to them, “Do now what I say and I promise you, by the power of God, that you will have not a bit less at the imperial inspection.”

And when they had done this, they delivered to the ministers of the emperor the same amount that they had taken aboard in Alexandria. They reported the miracle and greatly praised God through his servant. And the man of God distributed the grain to each according to his need, such that miraculously for two years it was not only enough to live on, but also enough to sow.

5

WHEN the people of that region had served idols, they had especially worshipped an image of the abominable Diana. Even in the time of the man of God some peasants still practised that execrable religion and offered the pagan rites beneath a tree consecrated to Diana. But the man of God expelled that practice from his borders and ordered that the tree be cut down. Angered by this, the ancient enemy concocted the oil Mydyate which could burn unnaturally on water or stones. And transforming himself into the form of a nun, he went in a little fishing boat to meet some people who were sailing to the man of God. And she said to them, “I would like to go with you to this holy man of God but I cannot. Therefore I beg you to offer this oil at his church and in remembrance of me use it to anoint the walls of the hall.”

And suddenly she was gone. And they saw another boat with honest people aboard, including one who looked very like Saint Nicholas who said to them, “What did that woman tell you, and what did she bring?”

And they recounted all to him in order. He said to them, “This was the shameless Diana. And so that you may know that I speak the truth, cast the oil into the sea.”

They threw it and a great fire was lit on the sea, and they saw it burn violently for a long time on the sea, contrary to nature. When they reached the servant of God, they said, “You are truly he who appeared to us at sea and saved us from the treachery of the devil.”

PER idem tempus cum quaedam gens Romano Imperio rebellasset, contra eam imperator tres principes, Nepotianum, Ursum et Apilionem misit, quos portui Andriaceae ob ventum contrarium applicatos beatus Nicolaus ut secum comederent invitavit, volens ut gentem suam a rapinis compescerent, quas in nundinis exercebant. Interim dum sanctus abesset consul corruptus pecunia tres innocentes milites iussit decollari. Quod ut vir sanctus audivit, rogavit principes illos, ut secum illuc usque gradu concito properarent, veniensque ad locum ubi decollandi erant, invenit eos poplite flexo et facie jam velata et spiculatorem ensen super eorum capita jam vibrasse. At Nicolaus zelo accensus et in lictorem se audacter ingessit et gladium de ejus manu eminus propulit innocentisque solvens eos incolumes secum duxit. Illico ad praetorium consulis properat et fores clausas vi reserat. Mox consul accurrens salutavit eum. Aspernens hoc sanctus dixit: “Inimice Dei, legis praevaricator, qua temeritate praesumsisti tanti conscius sceleris vultum aspicere nostrum?”

Quem postquam plurimum objurgasset, ad preces tamen illorum ducum eum poenitentem benigne recipit. Recepta igitur benedictione imperiales nuntii iter peragunt et impios sine sanguine hostes subdunt redientesque ab imperatore magnifice sunt recepti. Quidam autem eorum felicitatibus invidentes, praefecto imperatoris prece et pretio suggesserunt ut eos apud imperatorem de laesae majestatis crimine accusaret. Quod cum imperatori suggessisset, ille nimis furore repletus eos incarcerari praecepit ac sine aliqua interrogatione illa eos nocte occidi mandavit. Quod cum a custode didicissent, sciderunt vestimenta sua et gemere amare coeperunt. Tunc unus eorum, scilicet Nepotianus, recolens quod beatus Nicolaus tres innocentes liberaverat, exhortatus est alios ut ejus patrocinia flagitarent. Quibus orationibus Sanctus Nicolaus nocte illa Constantino Imperatori apparuit dicens: “Cur illos principes tam injuste comprehendisti et morti sine crimine addixisti? Surge velox eosque quantocius dimitti jubeto. Si non autem, oro Deum, ut tibi suscitet bellum, in quo tu corruas et bestiis cibus fias.”

Cui imperator: “Qui es tu qui hac nocte palatium meum ingressus talia audes loqui?”

Cui ille: “Ego sum Nicolaus Myreae civitatis episcopus.”

AROUND the same time a certain tribe rebelled against the Roman Empire, and the emperor sent three princes against them, Nepotianus, Ursus, and Apilio. They were forced by a headwind to put in at Andriaca, the port of Myra. The blessed Nicholas invited them to dine with him, desiring that they would restrain their men from the plundering that they usually did in marketplaces. But while the saint was away, the consul, corrupted by money, commanded that three innocent soldiers be beheaded. When the holy man heard this, he asked the princes to hurry with him thither. Coming to the place where they were to be beheaded, he found them kneeling and blindfolded, and the executioner with his sword poised above their heads. Nicholas, seized with zeal, boldly threw himself upon the executioner, and took the sword from the man’s grasp, casting it away. He released the innocent men and led them away safe and sound. He then hurried to the consul’s headquarters and forced open the locked doors. Immediately the consul came running and greeted him, but the saint, ignoring this, said, “Enemy of God, perverter of the law, with what temerity do you presume to look us in the face, knowing full well of your crime?”

After he had reprimanded him severely, at the behest of the princes he kindly pardoned the penitent. When they had received a blessing, the imperial messengers went on their way and they subdued the wicked rebels without bloodshed. And returning they were magnificently received by the emperor. Now some, envious of their happiness, suggested with words and money to the emperor’s prefect that he denounce the princes before the emperor for lèse majesté. And when this was suggested to the emperor, he was filled with a great rage, commanding that they be imprisoned, and with no further investigation, killed that same night. When they learned this from their jailer, they rent their garments and began to weep bitterly. Then one of them, Nepotianus, remembering how the blessed Nicholas had freed the three innocent men, urged the others to beg his help. In response to their prayers, Saint Nicholas that night appeared to Emperor Constantine, saying, “Why have you so unjustly arrested those princes and condemned them to death for no crime? Arise quickly and command that they be set free without delay. Otherwise, I pray to God that he kindle a war against you, in which you shall fall and become food for wild beasts.”

The emperor responded, “Who are you who enter my palace at night and dare to speak such things?”

He said to him, “I am Nicholas, bishop of the city of Myra.”

Sic et praefectum similiter terruit per visum dicens: "Mente et sensu perditae, cur in necem innocentium consensisti? Perge cito et eos liberare stude. Si non autem corpus tuum vermibus scaturiet et domus tua citius destruetur."

Cui ille: "Quis es tu qui nobis tanta minaris?"

"Scito," inquit, "me esse Nicolaum Myreae civitatis episcopum."

Utrisque evigilantibus statim mutuo sua somnia pandunt et pro illis incarceratis continuo mittunt. Quibus autem imperator: "Quas magicas artes nostis, ut tantis nos illudatis somniis?"

Cui responderunt, se magos non esse nec mortis sententiam meruisse. Tunc imperator: "Nostis," inquit, "hominem cui nomen est Nicolaus?"

At illi audito hoc nomine manus extenderunt ad caelum rogantes Deum ut eos Sancti Nicolai meritis a praesenti periculo liberaret. Et cum imperator totam vitam ejus et mirabilia ab iis didicisset, dixit iis: "Ite et Deo gratias agite, qui vos ejus precibus liberavit. Sed et de nostris eidem afferte gaudiolis rogantes eum, ut ulterius mihi minas non inferat, sed pro me et regno meo ad Dominum preces fundat."

Post paucos dies praedicti viri ad Dei famulum se prosternunt dicentes: "Vere famulus Dei es, vere cultor et amator Christi."

Cumque sibi omnia per ordinem retulissent, ille elevatis in caelum manibus immensas Deo laudes retulit ac bene instructos principes ad propria remisit.

VII

CUM autem Dominus vellet eum assumere, rogavit Dominum, ut angelos suos sibi mitteret, et inclinato capite angelos ad se venire vidit et dicto psalmo: *In te Domine speravi*, usque, *in manus tuas*, etc., tradidit spiritum anno Domini CCCXLIII, ubi caelestium melodia audita est.

Qui dum sepultus fuisset in tumba marmorea, a capite fons olei et a pedibus fons aquae profluxit et usque hodie ex ejus membris sacrum resudat oleum valens in salutem multorum. Successit autem ei quidam vir bonus, qui tamen de sede sua ab invidis est depulsus. Quo ejecto oleum fluere desiit, sed eo revocato protinus emanavit. Post multum vero temporis Turci Myream urbem destruxerunt, XLVII vero milites Baresenses illuc profecti quatuor monachis sibi astantibus tumbam Sancti Nicolai aperuerunt ossaque ejus in oleo natantia in urbem Baiream detulerunt, anno Domini MLXXXVII.

And in a similar way he terrified the prefect in a vision, saying, "You who have lost your mind and your senses, why did you agree to the death of three innocents? Go at once and hasten to free them. Otherwise your body shall teem with worms and your house be destroyed."

He replied, "Who are you who threaten us this way?"

"Know me," he answered, "to be Nicholas, the bishop of the city of Myra."

When they both awoke, they told their dreams to each other and immediately sent for the prisoners. The emperor asked them, "What sorcery have you learned, that you make sport of us by such dreams?"

They replied that they were not magicians and neither did they merit the death sentence. Then the emperor asked, "Do you know a man named Nicholas?"

And when they heard this name they raised their hands to heaven, praying God to free them from their present danger through the merit of Saint Nicholas. And when the emperor had heard from them the whole story of his life and miracles, he said to them, "Go and give thanks to God, who has freed you through that man's prayers. But also offer that man of my gifts, asking him to threaten me no longer, but rather to pray to the Lord for me and for my realm."

A few days later, these men went to the servant of God and prostrated themselves, saying, "Truly you are a servant of God, and truly a worshipper and lover of Christ."

And when they had reported everything in order, he raised his hands to heaven and gave great praise to God, and he sent the princes back home well instructed.

7

WHEN the Lord wished to take him up, he prayed the Lord to send his angels to him, and bowing his head he saw the angels come to him. And when he had said the psalm, *In thee, O Lord, have I hoped*, as far as, *into thy hands*, etc., he gave up his spirit in the year of our Lord 343 to the sound of heavenly music.

When he had been buried in a marble tomb, a fount of oil gushed from his head and a fount of water from his feet, and to this day a holy oil exudes from his body that brings health to many people. A good man succeeded him, but he was expelled from his see by envious men. When he was removed the oil ceased to flow, but it immediately flowed again once he was recalled. After a long time the Turks destroyed the city of Myra. Forty-seven soldiers went forth from Bari and, with four monks attending them, opened the tomb of Saint Nicholas. They

brought the bones, floating in oil, back to the city of Bari in the year of our Lord 1087.

VIII

VIR quidam ab uno Judaeo quandam summam pecuniae mutuo accepit jurans super altare Sancti Nicolai, cum alium fidejussorem habere nequiret, quod, quam citius posset, sibi redderet. Tenente autem illo diu pecuniam Judaeus eam expostulavit, sed eam sibi reddidisse affirmat. Trahit ergo eum ad iudicium, et juramentum indicitur debitori. Ille baculum cavatum, quem auro minuto impleverat, secum detulerat, ac si ejus adminiculo indigeret. Volens igitur facere juramentum Judaeo baculum tradidit reservandum. Juravit ille, quod plus igitur reddiderit etiam quam deberet. Facto juramento baculum suum repetiit, et Judaeus ignarus astutiae eum sibi reddidit. Rediens autem, qui fraudem fecerat, in quodam bivio oppressus corrui somno currusque cum impetu veniens eum necavit et plenum baculum auro fregit et aurum effudit. Audiens hoc Judaeus concitus illico venit cumque dolum vidisset et a multis ei suggereretur, ut aurum reciperet, omnino renuit, nisi, qui defunctus fuerat, ad vitam beati Nicolai meritis redderetur, asserens se, si hoc fieret, baptismum suscepturum et Christianum futurum. Continuo qui defunctus fuerat suscitatur et Judaeus in Christi nomine baptizatur.

IX

QUIDAM Judaeus videns beati Nicolai virtuosam potentiam in miraculis faciendis imaginem ejus sibi fieri praecepit eamque in sua domo collocavit, cui res suas, cum aliquo longius iret, cum minis commendabat haec vel similia verba dicens: “Ecce Nicolae omnia bona mea tibi custodienda committo et, nisi omnia bene custodieris, ultionem expetam de te verberibus et flagellis.”

Quadam igitur vice dum ille abesset, fures adveniunt, cuncta rapiunt, solam imaginem derelinquunt. Judaeus autem rediens et se spoliatum videns imaginem alloquitur talibus vel similibus usus verbis: “Domine Nicolae, nonne in domo mea te posueram, ut res meas a latronibus servares? Cur hoc facere noluisti et latrones quare non prohibuisti? Igitur dira tormenta recipies et pro latronibus poenam lues. Sicque damnum meum in tuis recom-

8

A CERTAIN man borrowed a sum of money from a Jew, swearing upon the altar of Saint Nicholas, since no other guarantor was to be had, that he would repay it as soon as he was able. When he had held it for a long time the Jew demanded it back, but he claimed he had already returned it. The Jew brought him before a judge and an oath was imposed on the debtor. He had brought with him a hollow staff filled with the gold pieces, as though he needed it for a support. Being willing to swear the oath, he handed the staff to the Jew to hold for him. The man then swore that he had paid back even more than he owed. Having sworn his oath, he asked for his staff back, and the Jew, unaware of his cunning, returned it to him. When the man who had committed the fraud was returning home, he was overcome by sleep and collapsed at a certain crossroads. A cart came with great force, killing him and breaking the staff full of gold, which poured out of it. Hearing of this, the Jew hurried to the spot. When he had seen the treachery, it was suggested by many that he should take back the gold, but he emphatically refused unless the dead man should be restored to life through the merits of the blessed Nicholas. He maintained that if this should come to pass he would receive baptism and become a Christian. Without delay he who had been dead was raised, and the Jew was baptized in the name of Christ.

9

A CERTAIN Jew, seeing blessed Nicholas' virtuous power to work miracles, had an image made of him which he set up in his house. With threats he commended his things to it when he was gone for an extended time, saying these words or similar: “Behold, Nicholas, I commit all my goods to you for safekeeping, and if you do not guard them well, I shall exact revenge with beatings and lashes.”

One day while he was away thieves came and stole everything, leaving only the statue. The Jew returned to find he had been robbed, and addressed the statue in such words or similar: “Lord Nicholas, did I not put you in my house to guard my things from thieves? Why have you not done so, and not stopped the thieves? For this you will suffer dire torments and pay for the thieves.

pensabo tormentis et furorem meum in tuis refrigerabo verberibus et flagellis.”

Accipiens ergo Judaeus imaginem dire eam verberat direque flagellat. Mira res prorsus et stupenda. Dividentibus furibus, quae rapuerant, sanctus Dei, tamquam in se verbera recepisset, apparuit haec vel similia verba dicens: “Cur tam dire pro vobis flagellatus sum? Cur tam crudeliter verberatus? Cur tormenta tot passus? Ecce quomodo corpus meum livet. Ecce qualiter effusione sanguinis rubet. Pergite citius et cuncta reddite quae tulistis. Alioquin Dei omnipotentis in vos ira desaeviet, ita ut scelus vestrum in medium publicetur et quilibet vestrum suspendium patiat.”

Ad quem illi: “Quis es tu, qui nobis talia loqueris?”

Et ille: “Ego sum Nicolaus, servus Jesu Christi, quem Judaeus ille pro rebus suis quas tulistis, tam crudeliter flagellavit.”

Territi illi ad Judaeum veniunt, miraculum referunt, ab eo, quid imagini fecerit, audiunt, cuncta reddunt. Sicque et latrones ad viam redeunt rectitudinis, et Judaeus fidem amplectitur Salvatoris.

X

VIR quidam pro amore filii sui litteras addiscentis festum Sancti Nicolai annuatim solemniter celebrabat. Quadam igitur vice pater pueri convivium praeparavit et multos clericos invitavit. Venit autem diabolus ad januam in habitu peregrini petens eleemosinam sibi dari. Jubet quantocius pater filio ut det eleemosinam peregrino. Properat puer, sed peregrinum non inveniens insequitur abeuntem. Cumque ad quoddam compitum pervenisset, apprehendens diabolus puerum, eum strangulavit. Quod audiens pater vehementer ingemuit, corpus tulit, in thalamo collocavit coepitque prae dolore clamare et dicere: “Fili dilectissime, quomodo est vobis? Sancte Nicolae haec est merces honoris, quem vobis tamen exhibui.”

Et eum haec et similia diceret, statim puer quasi de somno evigilans oculos aperuit et surrexit.

XI

VIR quidam nobilis rogavit beatum Nicolaum, ut sibi filium a Domino impetraret, promittens, se filium

Thus will I compensate my loss by your torments and cool my rage by your beatings and lashes.”

Then taking the statue, the Jew beat and scourged it cruelly. Then something utterly wonderful and stupendous happened. The holy one of God, having the aspect of one scourged, appeared to the thieves who were dividing what they had stolen, and said these words or similar: “Why have I been whipped so harshly for you? Why have I been so cruelly beaten? Why have I endured such torments? See how my body is bruised. See how it reddens with my running blood. Go quickly and return all that you have taken. Otherwise the anger of almighty God will rage against you, and your crime will be made known, and all of you will be hanged.”

They replied to him, “Who are you who say such things to us?”

And he replied, “I am Nicholas, the servant of Jesus Christ, whom the Jew has so cruelly scourged for the things you took.”

Terrified, they went to the Jew and told him of the marvel, and heard from him what he had done to the image, and gave back everything. Thus the thieves returned to the way of righteousness, and the Jew embraced the faith of our Saviour.

10

A CERTAIN man celebrated the feast of Saint Nicholas each year with great solemnity out of love for his son who was learning to read and write. One time the father of the boy prepared a banquet and invited many clergymen. But the devil came to his door in the garb of a pilgrim, asking that he give him alms. The father straightaway told his son to give alms to the pilgrim. The boy hastened, but finding no one there set off in search of the departed pilgrim. And when the boy came to a certain crossroads, the devil seized the boy and strangled him. When the father heard, he was stricken with grief. He took the body and laid it in the bedchamber, and began to cry out in sorrow and say, “Beloved son, how is it with you? Saint Nicholas, is this the reward for the honour which I have long shown you?”

And as he said these and similar words, the boy suddenly opened his eyes, as though waking from sleep, and arose.

11

A CERTAIN nobleman asked blessed Nicholas that he might receive a son from the Lord, promising to

ad ecclesiam ejus ducturum et sciphum aureum oblaturum. Filius igitur nascitur et ad aetatem perducitur et sciphus fieri jubetur. Qui dum sibi valde placeret, suis eum adaptavit usibus et alium aequae valentem fieri praecepit. Navigantibus itaque ad ecclesiam Sancti Nicolai jubet pater filio, ut in illo scipho, quem primo fieri fecit, aquam sibi afferret. Puer autem, quum vellet haurire cum scipho, in mare cecidit et statim disparuit. Pater autem amare flens nihilominus votum suum perfecit. Veniens igitur ad altare Sancti Nicolai cum obtulisset secundum sciphum tamquam projectus cecidit de altari; cum autem eum elevasset et super altare iterum posuisset, rursus de altari longius est projectus. Mirantibus omnibus ad tam grande spectaculum, ecce puer sanus et incolumis advenit primum sciphum suis gestans manibus, narravitque coram omnibus, quod quando in mare cecidit, statim beatus Nicolaus affuit et eum illaesum servavit. Sicque pater ejus laetus effectus utrumque sciphum beato Nicolao obtulit.

XII

QUIDAM vir dives meritis beati Nicolai filium habuit, quem Adeodatum vocavit. Hic sancto Dei capellam in domo sua construens omni anno festum ejus solemniter celebravit. Erat autem locus ille situs juxta terram Agarenorum. Adeodatus ergo quadam vice ab Agarenis capitur et in servitutem regis eorum deputatur. Sequenti anno dum festum Sancti Nicolai pater ejus devote celebraret et puer sciphum pretiosum tenens regi assisteret, recolit suam captionem et parentum dolorem et gaudium, quod in domo sua ea die fiebat, coepitque altius suspirare. Quorum suspiriorum causam dum rex minis extorsisset, ait rex: "Quidquid tuus Nicolaus agat, tu hic nobiscum manebis."

Et subito facto vento vehementi totamque domum concutiente puer cum scipho rapitur et ante fores ecclesiae, ubi parentes agebant sollemnia, collocatur, et magnum gaudium omnibus generatur. Alibi legitur tamen, quod praedictus juvenis fuit de Normandia, qui ultra mare pergens a soldano capitur et ab ipso saepe verberatur: qui dum in festo Sancti Nicolai verberaretur et in carcere inclusus fleret et pro sua liberatione et pro laetitia, quam tunc habere consueverant parentes ejus, subito obdormivit et evigilans in capella patris sui se invenit.

bring the son to his church and offer a golden chalice. And so the son was born and came of age, and they had a chalice made. It so pleased the man that he kept it for his own use and ordered another of equal value to be made. And as they were sailing to the church of Saint Nicholas, the father ordered the boy to bring him water in the first chalice that he had had made. The boy however, as he sought to fill the cup, fell into the sea and immediately disappeared. The father weeping bitterly nevertheless fulfilled his vow. Coming to the altar of Saint Nicholas, he placed the second chalice there and it fell from the altar as though it had been thrown. When he had picked it up and placed it anew on the altar, it was thrown again even further from the altar. But while everyone marvelled at this great spectacle, the boy arrived, healthy and unharmed, bearing the first chalice in his hands. And he recounted before all how when he fell into the sea the blessed Nicholas immediately attended him and kept him safe. The father was made so happy by this that he offered both chalices to the blessed Nicholas.

12

A CERTAIN rich man had a son through the merits of the blessed Nicholas, and he called him Adeodatus, "God-Given". This man built a chapel to God's saint in his house and celebrated his feast day each year with great solemnity. Now this place was situated near the land of the Hagarenes (that is the descendents of Hagar, or the Saracens). One day Adeodatus was captured by the Hagarenes and assigned to the service of their king. The following year, while his father was devoutly celebrating the feast of Saint Nicholas, the boy was holding a precious chalice and waiting on the king. He reflected on his capture and his parents' sadness, and the joy that there used to be in his house on that day, and he began to sigh loudly. When the king had extracted from him the cause of his sighs, he said, "Whatsoever your Nicholas may do, you will remain here with us."

And suddenly a great wind arose, shaking the whole house, and the boy with the chalice was carried off and placed before the doors of the church, where his parents were performing the solemnities, and great joy was had by all. Elsewhere it is written that the same youth was from Normandy and was captured by the sultan as he crossed the sea, and was often beaten by him. When he was beaten and locked in prison on the feast of Saint Nicholas, he wept for his deliverance and for the joy that his parents once had. Suddenly he fell asleep, and on awakening he found himself in his father's chapel.