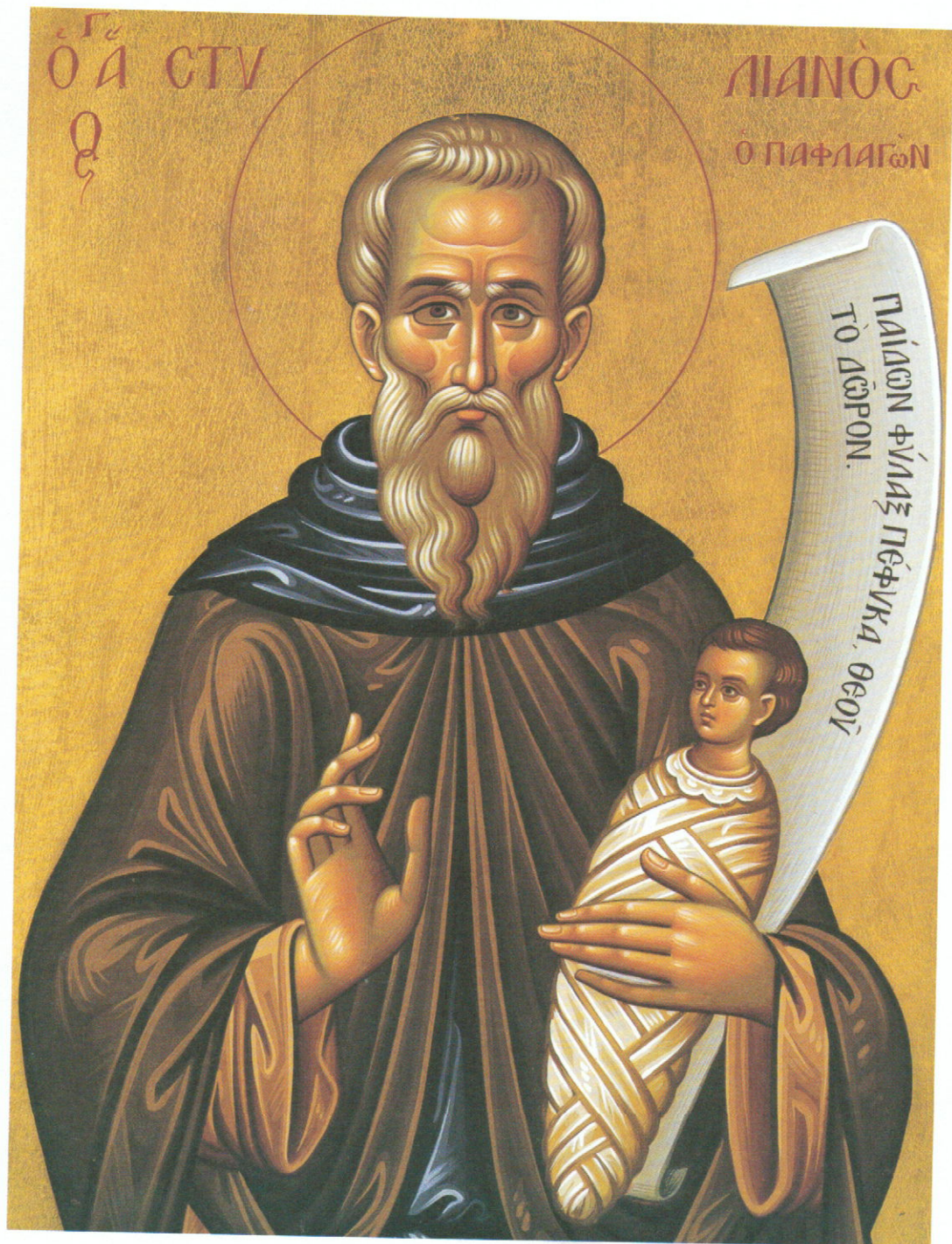


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Ω

ΛΙΑΝΟΣ
Ο ΠΑΦΛΑΓΩΝ

ΠΑΙΔΩΝ ΦΥΛΑΞ ΠΕΦΥΚΑ. ΘΕΟΥ
ΤΟ ΔΩΡΟΝ.



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

TwentyFourth Sunday after Pentecost

November 27, 2011

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel
J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Today we festal anointing on the occasion of this past week's holyday of the most solemn feast of the Entrance of the Birthgiver of God in the Temple. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we reply, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ We will be having until the Feast of the Nativity a Basket Collection of foods for the local food pantry in assisting those in need. Please bring your donation in as soon as possible and place it in the basket in the vestibule. We thank you in advance for your consideration of food and accompanying prayer on their behalf.

+++ A donor is needed for the candles for the Nativity of our Lord feast day. Please see Father.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ Each Monday evening at 7: 30PM we have prayer devotions with homily in preparing for the coming of the Lord among us. Please be certain to invest time and soul in this worthy cause. COME, LORD JESUS!

+++The St. Nicholas Day Luncheon consisting of non-meat dishes will be held next Sunday, December 4 after the Divine Liturgy. We will have a visit from St. Nicholas and the Food Donation Sheet is available today.

+++The offering for flowers to beautify our parish church on the feast of the Nativity of our Lord will be taken *next* Sunday, December 4. Please be generous with your sacrificial offering.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week: Tithe Offering, \$420.00; Candles, \$33.00; Food Coupons, \$320.00; Kitchen, \$431.00; Holyday, \$29.00, for a total of \$1233.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

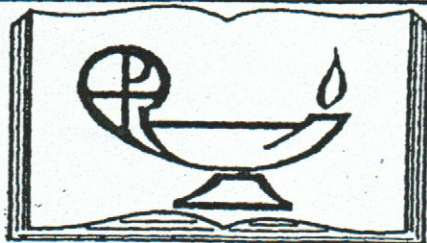
+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Mary Jaakobs, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleni Pallas, Debra Szmaida, Paul Szmaida, and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1645.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$110,000.00. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5350.00 on this project to date!

LORD



TEACH
US

When Tempted

This we know: our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed and we might be slaves to sin no longer. Sin will no longer have power over you; you are now under grace, not under the law Romans 6: 6, 14.

There is a cause for rejoicing here. You may for a time have to suffer the distress of many trials, but this is so that your faith, which is more precious than the passing splendor of fire-tried gold may by its genuineness lead to praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ appears 1 Peter 1: 6, 7.

Yet in all this we are more than conquerors because of him who has loved us Romans 8: 37.

I tell you all this that in me you may find peace. You will suffer in the world. But take courage! I have conquered the world John 16: 33.

Finally, draw your strength from the Lord and his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. In all circumstances hold faith up before you as your shield; it will help you extinguish the fiery darts of the evil one Ephesians 6: 10, 11, 16.

Who gave himself for our sins, to rescue us from the present evil age, as our God and Father willed Galatians 1: 4.

Therefore submit to God, resist the devil and he will take flight James 4: 7.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. He will strike at your head, while you strike at his feet Genesis 3: 15.

The Penance of Inconvenience

When things don't quite come together, we can still grow in faith.

As small children in catechetical classes we heard stories about the saints and the great penances they performed, even endured for God. Such stories, however, while meant to be edifying, did us a disservice, for they gave us a distorted picture of penance. It is true that life sometimes affords us the opportunity to do heroic penances, such as working through difficulties in a relationship, caring for an ill loved one, or enduring extreme physical or emotional pain. But more often, the penances life sets before us are of lesser degree, though not necessarily of lesser significance. One such common penance is the penance of inconvenience.

Inconvenience occurs when things do not come together for us as we planned and hoped, when they simply just do not jibe. You settle down to watch a good video, for example, the first you have been able to see in months and your VCR eats the tape. Or you plan a weekend getaway only to have your youngest child come down with the measles. Examples of inconvenience could be endless: breaking a shoelace, getting a flat tire, standing in line, running out of milk, missing the bus, or waiting for someone who is very late. Certainly, experiencing inconvenience as penance can help us grow spiritually. First, it keeps us humble. When we are inconvenienced, we are reminded we are not in complete control of our lives. Just when we start priding ourselves on our competency, we spill coffee all over our new suit or dent the car fender while pulling it into the garage. It is good for us and our spiritual growth to be inconvenienced from time to time, if only to remind us of our lack of self-sufficiency and our corresponding need for God.

Putting up with inconvenience encourages humility in another way, too. Ordinarily, with pain of inconvenience is so slight we are embarrassed to admit it bothers us. How can I complain of a headache when someone is suffering with cancer? How can I be disconcerted by a cold supper when someone gets no supper at all? How dare I make a fuss about a few days of hot weather when missionaries labor and sweat in the tropics all year long? Inconvenience also makes demands on our love. If we think about it, most inconveniences are directly related to our attempts at serving others. We endure the inconvenience of standing in a grocery checkout line because we are buying food for the family. Or we accept a time that is inconvenient for ourselves because it is more convenient for a friend. Putting up with such inconveniences for the sake of love somehow makes the penance easier. And the love we bring to our inconveniences can transform these daily annoyances into something beautiful for others and for God.

The penance of inconvenience can also nurture our faith. Sometimes it is easy to trust God when we experience major trials and hardships, a personal tragedy, a serious disappointment. But faith tells us God is involved even in the small details of our lives. The little inconveniences we bear, a toothache, a mild embarrassment, a slight misunderstanding, all of these can play big roles in the unfolding of God's design for us in our daily living. But putting up with them in a gracious way is difficult because inconvenience is not a once and for all kind of thing. It is a lifetime companion.

And our modern society well knows how difficult inconvenience is, and so it goes to great lengths to do away with it. Now we have convenience stores, convenience banking, convenience layaway plans, convenient mortgages. Little wonder this illusion of ridding our lives of inconvenience can even invade our prayer and worship life. Perhaps we have found ourselves praying, "Lord, please give me what I ask for- NOW!" or "I'll do whatever You ask, God as long as it's not inconvenient!"

What does the revealed Word of God say about inconvenience? First of all, Scripture is replete with examples of individuals who embraced inconvenience out of faith and love. When God commanded Abraham to journey to a strange land, that was certainly tremendously inconvenient. But Abraham responded unhesitatingly. In the gospels, Mary endured great and extreme inconvenience in agreeing to become the Mother of Jesus. Christ's own life was filled with inconvenience. St. John tells us Jesus worked his first miracle at Mary's request, at her convenience, not His own. Throughout His life, in fact, Jesus endured the daily inconveniences of travel and fatigue. When crowds pressed in, He forgot His tiredness and willingly taught them anyway simply because they were eagerly there.

On one occasion, Jesus stopped teaching to go to the house of Jairus to cure the man's dying daughter. When Jesus entered the house with Jairus, the servants informed their master the little girl was already dead. "Do not trouble Jesus," they advised. But Jesus didn't mind being troubled for the sake of a child. As a result, the girl was brought back to life. And therein lies the real beauty of the penance of inconvenience; it can bring life to ourselves and others. For in the spiritual life, what causes death is selfishness. And if we are not careful, selfishness can creep into our lives step by little step, convenience by convenience. By embracing the penance of inconvenience, then, we hinder the encroachment of selfishness into our lives.

And what are we here for in the first place if not to grow, to develop, to love, to affirm and confirm the faith of Christ? Without a doubt, the penance of inconvenience can play a vital role in achieving that goal.

Ability To Sacrifice Is Greatest Virtue

The little girl came from school directly to take up her Scripture and catechetical lessons. She had no lunch or money. She was as hungry as she was thin, a pitiful sight!

"Here, take a quarter," said the teacher, "go buy yourself a chocolate bar, you must be terribly hungry." "Yes sir," said the child, as she took the quarter eagerly and ran avidly to the candy store on the corner.

The little girl quickly came back, but without the chocolate bar.

"What happened, child, aren't you hungry?" the teacher asked upon her return. "Yes, I was hungry, but not as much as before. I gave the chocolate bar to a little boy, standing in rags, who looked hungrier than I."

To his astonishment, the teacher came upon a beautiful experience in life. He learned a precious lesson of sacrifice from a child. The sacrifice in the spirit of feeling and extensive sensitivity can be a satisfying act, even to the point of self-deprivation. It can be a form of self-denial capped by a feeling of worthy self-love.

Here, the child, in a way, was saying because I care about myself as a person, I must care more about that poor child whose needs are greater than mine. The child is living the mystical life of Christ naturally, without even being aware of it.

This kind of offering is a gift of the angels, a gift of the heart and soul. And it is the way our God is asking us to always give, to always share His blessings and gifts with those in need.

Here we stand highest on our own altar of self-esteem and self-awareness as we show ourselves capable and willing to offer the myriad gifts of love. Here we stand ennobled because we in fact recognize our own human dignity and reflect it admirably. And highest among them is the gift of ourselves to others, in acts of self-denial, self-sacrifice, in self-fulfillment and self-completion.

The greatest accomplishments in the history of humanity and in the lives of individuals were the results of self-discipline. The greatest discoveries of man's world, inner nature and in outer nature, came through self-sacrifice, rigorous exercise and self-control.

Beethoven, the super nova in the galaxy of musical personalities, composed the immortal "Ode to Joy," in deafness, pain and wretched health. "Oh God," he wrote, "You look down on my inner soul and

know that it is filled with love of humanity and the desire to do good. Urge your children," he continues in a communication with his brother, "to follow the path of virtue, as the only one that can bring you happiness because money surely cannot." He learned and lived the lesson of life early on.

Virtue. What is the greatest virtue if not the ability to sacrifice, to share in self-offerings, at the cost of self-denial, to shoulder burdens with fellow believers?

From the earliest days of man, since crawling out of the darkness of the cave to gaze at the stars, he had a yearning for sacrifice to the super power he could but only dimly visualize, which he could not actually fathom nor approach. But inside this embryonic, developing humanity of the two-legged creature, the impulse to distinguish himself, only in the capability of his nature, to offer the supreme sacrifice on the altar of God.

We have come a long way since the caveman. Christ in us inspires us to nobler heights. But the human impulse remains the same: Sacrifice sets the adrenalin grace in our humanity. In self-denial is our own self-crowning. In self-sharing is our ultimate freedom to selfhood, personhood in God's image.

Sacrifice. Emphatically yes, but not self-affliction, nor self-immolation to prove

ourselves simply human. That is barbaric. For heaven seeks the contrite spirit in joyous love and in peace offerings.

Our salvation is not in a self-indulgence of luxury, entertainment, pleasure and ease that devitalizes the body to leave us soulless and unaware of our connection with God and eternity.

Yes, a little exercise of body and soul, yes a little less fat in the muscle; yes a little less alcohol to the dizzying head; yes, a little privation here and there, yes, a little abstinence from self-indulgence to spend time in the actual presence of God, yes a little less over-indulgence in ourselves and in our children that God is glorified with our sacrifices.

Yes, to a little sacrifice, to a little more freedom in ourselves to choose the right and virtuous, and to a little more triumph in individual choice over the worldly gods of goods.

Yes, say yes to the gentle proddings and urgings of the Holy Spirit for the opportunity to realize yourself as child of God. Yes, to heavenly strength in the soul as it overcomes the inclinations of the flesh. Yes to becoming a citizen of eternal heaven while abandoning that of temporary earth.

Yes, child, say yes to the child impulse within us which witnesses, "I gave to a little boy who looked hungrier than I."

NEW AGE

Dyed in the polyester New Agers are out to supplant any and all traditional religion. In a *Time* magazine article not long ago, it was described it as a "substitute religion, a vast amorphous hodgepodge of spiritualism, faith healing, reincarnation, meditation, yoga, macrobiotic diets and mystical environmentalism." When men stop believing in God, they do not just revert to believing in nothing, they believe in anything! This has become popular among the Hollywood hooligans.

The word *new* is in its name, but this movement does not differ much from the Gnosticism which infected early centuries of the Church. Its followers thought they had knowledge and power hidden from the rest of the world, but communicated exclusively to them. Their beliefs are echoed today in the TV ads for cassettes that "will unleash the power hidden within you," in seminars and lectures on mind control, self-affirmation, creation spirituality, and astrology. God is not mentioned too much because it is a secularist manifestation.

A catalogue of the differences between New Age and Orthodox beliefs would be of tiresome length, but when Christ says, you must be born again; New Age thought says you must use birth control. Christ says, "Blessed are the peacemakers;" New Age thought says, "Blessed are the pacifists." Christ says from the Cross, "Behold your Mother," New Age says from the crowd, "Behold your surrogate mother." If New Age comes to flower, poets will not know Dante from Machiavelli; the politicians will not know Abraham Lincoln from Saddam Hussein; the medical researchers will extol Pasteur and Megele in the same way. It will be no different to discern difference between George Washington and Hitler or the value of saints over someone like Nitchze or in architecture, an exalted church from a suburban shopping center. And of course, people would then not be able to tell the difference between Christ and the serpent.

The New Age movement is unorganized and has no hierarchical leadership, so the only way of opposing it is to recognize and deplore as publicly as possible its attacks on the Church and its teaching. There are some people influenced rather boldly by this movement who would like to delude themselves into believing they are communicants of the Orthodox Church. They are lost people and most troublesome because of their superficiality. This type of philosophy is not really new. Its doctrines are somewhat ancient aberrations that the Church has condemned in the past and continues to fight presently.

Did You Know That ...

...our religious education and spiritual formation survives when what has been learned has been forgotten?

...reputation is what you have when you come to a new community; character is what you have when you go away?

...a happy soul is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes?

...it is all right to hold a conversation, but you should let go of it now and then?

...if you listen to too much advice, you may wind up making other people's mistakes?

...you will never get a grip until you learn to let go?

...you should not tell me how good you make it, but how good it makes me when I use it?

...love creates an "us" without destroying a "me"?

...example has more followers than reason?

...familiarity breeds content?

...every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward?

...character consists of what you do on the third and fourth tries?

...if you want to pull a rabbit out of a hat, make sure you first put one in there?

...he who hesitates is sometimes saved?

...we can generally learn more about Peter from listening to Peter tell us about Paul than we can about Paul?



*Wisdom Of
The*



*Byzantine
Fathers*

Go outside into a field and ask yourself: "To whom does this field belong?" And you will reply to yourself: "It belongs to me" or "It belongs to so-and-so." Then ask yourself: "To whom has this field belonged in the past?" If you know the history of that field, a list of names will appear in your mind. Then you will realize how little ownership means. That field has seen countless generations of people claiming ownership of it. Countless generations of feet have walked on it, have plowed its soil, and have sown and harvested on it. If the field were sentient, do you think it would feel owned by the person who claims ownership? Of course not. The field would feel that it owned itself and was welcoming the person who claimed ownership merely as a visitor. That is the way we should always think of ourselves on this earth: we are merely visitors, here for a short span to learn virtue, then after that span we shall continue our journey toward the kingdom that lasts forever St. John Chrysostom.

The Old Law did not punish the desire to hold on to wealth; it punished theft. But now the rich man is not condemned for taking the property of others; rather he is condemned for not giving his own property away St. Gregory the Great.

"LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME UNTO ME ..."

S AINT STYLIANUS was born in Pamphlagonia in Asia Minor sometime between the 4th and 6th centuries. Like many of the early saints, Stylianus inherited a great fortune when his parents died. He could have lived out his life in luxury, never wanting for anything. Instead, he chose to give everything away so that he could "take up his cross" and follow the Lord. Stylianus left the city to live in a monastery, where he zealously practiced the ascetic virtues. When the other monks became jealous of his pious life, Stylianus left the community and went to live in a wilderness cave, constantly spending his days in prayer and fasting.

Word soon spread of the exemplary life that Stylianus was living. Many inhabitants of his home town of Pamphlagonia would come to hear his teachings and seek his wise counsel. It is said that his healing prayers were powerful, and many people were cured of their illnesses through his prayers.

St. Stylianus was known to strongly care for children. It seemed that his healing prayers were most successful when sickly children were brought to him. When St. Stylianus died, his face shone radiantly, and an angel appeared to take his soul to heaven. Even after his death, many parents continued to pray to him to intercede in behalf of their little ones. When a child became ill, it was quite common for parents to have an icon of St. Stylianus painted and hung over the child's bed.

St. Stylianus is remembered as a protector of children and a patron saint to childless women. This is the reason he is depicted holding a child.

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