

Commemorations in the Prayers



December 5

Clement of Alexandria (c. A. D. 215), *Catechist & Apologist*

Titus Flavius Clemens, a native of Athens, was converted to the Christian Faith by the teaching of Pantaenus (Pantainos), a leading teacher and philosopher at the Catechetical School of Alexandria. It was the first such school, and upon Pantaenus' death, Clement succeeded his teacher. Clement rejected Greek paganism as a young man, yet regarded Greek philosophy as being a preparation for the Gospel, like the Torah to the Hebrews. Three of his major works survive, and are regarded as a trilogy. Clement's best known student was Origen, the eminent and controversial theologian, who also became a catechist at the School.



December 6

Nicholas of Myra (A. D. 343), *Pastor & Confessor*

Nicholas, of Greek descent, is said to have been born of wealthy Christian parents. He became bishop in the maritime city of Myra in western Asia Minor (now Demre, Turkey). One of the earliest attested incidents of his life tells of his rescue of three girls from being forced into prostitution. On three successive nights, Nicholas dropped a sack of gold coins through the window of their house to provide each girl a dowry. An early list has Nicholas among the attendees at the Council of Nicaea in 325, and a legend says he became so furious at the arch-heretic Arius that he slapped Arius across the face. Through the Dutch name for him, *Sinter Klaase*, the real-life St. Nicholas is the basis of our Santa Claus.



December 7

Ambrose of Milan (A. D. 397), *Pastor & Hymn-writer*

Ambrose was the governor of northern Italy in its capital, Milan. When Milan's bishop died, Ambrose sought to maintain peace between two Christian groups, the Athanasians and the Arians. The meeting resulted in his being elected bishop with the support of both sides. He was installed on December 7, AD 374. Ambrose gave away his wealth, lived in simplicity, and by his preaching brought all of Milan into the Athanasian camp. Four of Ambrose's hymns survive, including *Veni redemptor gentium* (*Savior of the Nations, Come*, LSB 332). He is counted among the four great Latin Doctors of the Church, along with his most famous catechumen, Augustine of Hippo.