

*The day of Translation of the Relics of Saint Nicholas from Myra to Bari is celebrated on May 9.*

From: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint\\_Nicholas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Nicholas)



*(St. Nicholas (San Nicola) is the patron of the city of Bari, where it is believed he is buried. Its deeply felt celebration is called the Festa di San Nicola, held on the 7–9 of May. In particular on 8 May the relics of the saint are carried on a boat on the sea in front of the city with many boats following (Festa a mare). As Saint Nicholas is said to protect children and virgins, on 6 December there is a ritual called the Rito delle nubili: unmarried women wishing to find a husband can attend to an early-morning Mass, in which they have to turn around a column 7 times. A similar tradition is currently observed in Sassari, where during the day of Saint Nicholas, patron of the city, gifts are given to young women who need help to get married.)*

*~After the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, the Byzantine Empire temporarily lost control over most of Asia Minor to the invading Seljuk Turks. Myra, a popular place of pilgrimage because of Nicholas' tomb, was overtaken by the Turks. Because of the many wars and attacks in the region, some Christians were concerned that access to the tomb might become difficult. For both the religious and commercial advantages of a major pilgrimage site, the Italian cities of Venice and Bari vied to get the Nicholas relics.<sup>[3]</sup> Taking advantage of the confusion, in the spring of 1087, sailors from Bari in Apulia seized part of the remains of the saint from his*

*burial church in Myra, over the objections of the Greek Orthodox monks. Returning to Bari, they brought the remains with them and cared for them. The remains arrived on 9 May 1087. There are numerous variations of this account. In some versions those taking the relics are characterized as thieves or pirates, in others they are said to have taken them in response to a vision wherein Saint Nicholas himself appeared and commanded that his relics be moved in order to preserve them from the impending Muslim conquest. Currently at Bari, there are two churches at his shrine, one Roman Catholic and one Orthodox.*

*Sailors from Bari collected just half of Nicholas' skeleton, leaving all the minor fragments in the grave. These were collected by Venetian sailors during the first crusade and brought to Venice, where a church to Saint Nicholas, the patron of sailors, was built on the Lido. This tradition was confirmed in two scientific investigations of the relics in Bari and Venice, which revealed that the relics in the two cities belong to the same skeleton.<sup>[23][24]</sup> Many churches in Europe, Russia and the United States claim to possess small relics, such as a tooth or a finger.<sup>[25]</sup> It is said that in Myra the relics of Saint Nicholas each year exuded a clear watery liquid which smells like rose water, called manna (or myrrh), which is believed by the faithful to possess miraculous powers.<sup>[26]</sup> After the relics were brought to Bari, they continued to do so, much to the joy of the new owners. Vials of myrrh from his relics have been taken all over the world for centuries, and can still be obtained from his church in Bari. Even up to the present day, a flask of manna is extracted from the tomb of Saint Nicholas every year on 6 December (the Saint's feast day) by the clergy of the basilica. The myrrh is collected from a sarcophagus which is located in the basilica vault and could be obtained in the shop nearby. The liquid gradually seeps out of the tomb, but it is unclear whether it originates from the body within the tomb, or from the marble itself; since the town of Bari is a harbour, and the tomb is below sea level, there have been several natural explanations proposed for the manna fluid, including the transfer of seawater to the tomb by capillary action.~*