

ST. NICOLAS

St. Nicolas died December 5, 345 or 352. Although he is one of the most popular saints in the Greek as well as the Latin Church, there is scarcely anything historically certain about him except that he was Bishop of Myra in the fourth century.

Because of the many miracles attributed to his intercession, he is also known as Nikolaos the Wonderworker. He had a reputation for secret gift-giving, such as putting coins in the shoes of those who left them out for him, and thus became the model for Santa Claus.

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I was the only son of wealthy Christian parents. I was very religious from an early age and rigorously observed the fasts of Wednesday s and Friday s by eating only one meal for the day. My parents died in an epidemic while I was still young and my uncle Nicholas, who was bishop of Patara, raised me. He tonsured me as a reader. Tonsuring is the practice of Christian churches of cutting or shaving the hair from the scalp while leaving some parts uncut. The pattern cut and uncut was determined by the placement or position of the person. My uncle later ordained me as a priest.

In 325 I was one of the priests who signed the Nicene Creed.

There are many different legends concerning me. The most famous and the one I like the most is about a poor man with three daughters. The man was unable to afford a proper dowry for the girls and this meant that they would remain unmarried and their father thought to make them prostitutes. So I secretly planned to throw a purse filled with gold through the window opening for each of them. I planned to do this one purse per year. I got through the first two years with no problem, but the father was wise to me and laid in wait for me the third year. I then decided to secretly drop the final purse through the chimney. The last young lady had just washed her stockings that day and hung them by the mantel to dry. When I dropped the purse down it went into the stocking. I guess that is where the custom of hanging stockings to be filled on Christmas came from.

Food: Make fruit candy canes