

# St. Nicholas

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*Saint Name:* Nicholas of Bari or Saint Nicholas of Myra

*Dates:* March 15, 270 AD – December 6, 343 AD

*Location:* Greece

*Feast Day:* December 6<sup>th</sup>

When many talk about Saint Nicholas, they associated him with Santa Claus and gift giving, but he was so much more. Revered as a saint, Nicholas of Myra was a Christian bishop of the ancient Greek city of Myra (Demre) during the Roman Empire. He was Born March 15, 270 AD in Patara, Lycia (Turkey). At an early age, he lost both his parents and used his inheritance to help the poor and sick. The legend of St. Nicholas began shortly after his death as stories of his miracles and work for the poor spread to other parts of the world. He was a popular saint in Europe until the Reformation in the 1500's – the creation of Protestantism. Protestantism turned away from the practice of honoring saints. However, in Holland, Saint Nicholas remained an important figure and it was a common practice for children to lay out their shoes on his feast day. The next morning the children would find gifts in them. Dutch immigrants brought the legend and tradition of Sint Nikolaas (St. Nicholas) to America in the 1700s. St. Nicholas became the Santa Claus we know today. St. Nicholas died December 6, 343 AD in Myra and is buried at the Basilica di San Nicola, Bari, Italy. He is the patron saint of children, sailors, fisherman, pawnbrokers and others. His feast day is December 6.



St. Nicholas was not canonized – he was proclaimed a saint because of his kindness and gift giving to the poor and sick. Canonization did not begin until the 12<sup>th</sup> century.