



ADVENT

Nicholas

270–343

Feast Day—December 6



From the ninth century in the East and the eleventh century in the West, Nicholas has been one of the most popular saints in Christendom and in Christian art and is the patron of many countries, dioceses, churches, and cities. He was a Greek bishop of Myra in Lycia (now Turkey).

According to folklore, he may have saved three girls from prostitution, restored to life three children who had been killed, and saved three unjustly condemned men from death. While some sources say that he may have been imprisoned during the Diocletian persecution, there is no historical certainty that he suffered persecution for his faith. Likewise, while some sources place him at the Council of Nicaea in 325, it is uncertain if he attended.

His charity to the poor is commemorated in modern times by those who follow the tradition of stuffing a boot or a stocking with gifts on his feast day. “Santa Claus” comes from the Dutch form of his name, “Sinterklaas.” He is the patron saint of sailors, merchants, and children.

