

St. Nicolas`s Day

(St. Clause)



St. Nicolas was born about the year 300 AD in Petra (Asia Minor). His parents died very early, so he lived in a monastery. When he was seventeen, he became a priest, the youngest priest ever. After a certain time he became a bishop. He performed his service shortly in Petra and then he was sent to Myra, place on the coast of Asia Minor (Turkey today). He died on the 6th of December in 340, so this day became celebrated as the holiday of St. Clause.



He was very generous, kind man who gave all his wealth to the poor people. Often, by night he rept out of his house disguised in a mantle and mitre, and gave money, food and clothes to the poor and desperate people. After his death he was consecrated and then he became the patron saint of Greece, Russia, children and sailors. His recognizable symbols are bishop`s stick, long fluttering mantle, red mitre and long, long white beard.

St. Clause got his fame with a lot legends and sories about good deeds. One of them is a story about sailors saved in a storm by St.Nicolas. but one of the legends is specially famous. It is about his neighbour who had three daughters of marriagable ages. With time the man became very poor and he didn`t have money for his daughters` dowry. Bishop Nicolas was so kind and generous and he helped them. One night he climbed on his neighbour`s roof and dropped a few gold coins through the chimney. They fell into the socks hung on the fireplace. It was the beginning of the popular custom performed on the 6th of December.

In our country the children on the eve before clean their boots or shoes in the window or in front of their rooms hoping that the next morning they`ll find sweets, chocholate or apples in it meaning that throughout the whole year they were good children. But the legend was changed a bit, it says that St. Nicolas goes around accompanied with the ``Krampus``, a local word for the devil who brings rods for the naughty children and leaves them in the boots and shoes too. He is presented s a black man with horns on his head, long tail and tongue, carrying chains and big pitchfork in his hands.

The children are usually given both presents and beautiful small branches paintd in silver or gold colour. Sometimes two men dress up like St. Claus and Devil and visit kindergartens and schools bringing presents and golden or silver branches to the children.

