

Reflection Monday 2nd Week Advent St Nicolas 2021

St Nicholas, bishop of Myra, in Lycia (now part of Turkey) died in the fourth century. He has been venerated throughout the Church since the 10th century. Because he helped the poor, he is the patron saint of pawnbrokers, whose three golden balls represent the three purses of gold he is said to have given secretly to a poor man who could not afford dowries for his three daughters.

It is fitting that the feast of St. Nicholas comes at the beginning of Advent. He is the patron saint of shoppers and proclaims, **'Keep it simple!'** Keep it simple enough to fit in a shoe or stocking. One gift that could fit in a shoe or stocking, is a note that speaks of the precious gift of time. Such a St. Nicholas note might read: *'The gift I give to you is half an hour of quality conversation each night right after the dishes are done.'* Or, *'The gift I give to you is one Saturday a month to be with you and do whatever you want to do.'* Edward Hays

The name **"Santa Claus"** derives from *"Sinter Klaas,"* Holland's modified version of St. Nicholas. When Dutch settlers came to America, they brought Sinter Klaas with them. America, the melting pot of people, turned out to be the melting pot of traditions, also. Somehow, Sinter Klaas and England's "Father Christmas," another gift-giver, went into the same pot and emerged fused/confused as Santa Claus. Similarly, the gift-giving night shifted from the eve of December 5th to the eve of Christ's birth.

"Advent is concerned with that very connection between memory and hope which is so necessary to man. Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope. The purpose of the Church's year is continually to rehearse her great history of memories, to awaken the heart's memory so that it can discern the star of hope.... It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope." Pope Benedict XVI