

## The True Story of Santa

There was a young boy born in the third century named Nicholas.

Nicholas' parents believed in God.

They taught their young son about Jesus.

Nicholas grew to love the Lord too.

He became a great helper in the church.

When Nicholas' was very young his parents died in an epidemic. They left him a lot of money. Nicholas wanted to do good with the money left to him so he went to work finding those in need and helping them out.

At the time when Nicholas was alive, girls who wanted to marry a good man had to have a dowry. This was a special gift given to the young man who would be her husband. The dowry would be used for the young couple to get a good start in life. Without a dowry a girl wouldn't get a good husband, as a matter of fact she might not get a husband at all. Many girls who had no dowry were taken and sold as slaves. I know that sounds strange, but that was the custom in those days.

Nicholas had a friend who was poor. This friend had three daughters. Nicholas knew these girls and wanted them to have good husbands. He knew their father could never afford a dowry. He didn't want to embarrass the man or the girls by giving them money, so he came up with a plan.

The girls would hang their stockings on the end of their bed each night. When they awoke in the morning there was a sack of gold in each of their stockings. Nicholas had been there and secretly gave the three girls a dowry. Does this sound familiar?

Nicholas did many other things for the poor. This is why the Catholic Church called him a Saint. You may have heard him called,

Saint Nicholas.

It was a very trying time for Christians living during this period, and many of the priests and Christians were imprisoned. Nicholas too, was thrown in prison. Evil men did not like him giving to the poor, but this did not stop him. He secretly kept giving.

Saint Nicholas' love of children and his love for giving made him very famous.

The church set aside a day celebrating him.

He would leave behind coins in people shoes to help them out. Saint Nicholas also prayed for people.

Many people were healed when he prayed.

After Saint Nicholas died he was missed terribly.

In celebration of his life, people continued giving secretly and left presents for each other, in honor of him.

Some people swear that after his death, Saint Nicholas appeared to them and helped them.

One of the stories was about a young boy named Basilios. Arab Pirates came into the village and kidnapped him, taking him away to another country to be the king's cup bearer. Basilios' mother prayed everyday for his protection. Basilios prayed too. It was time for St. Nicholas' feast to be celebrated. How Basilios wanted to be home with his mother on this day of celebration. Basilios' mother refused to join in the feast of celebration for St. Nicholas, because she missed her young boy so much. She spent the day praying for her son.

Basilios waited on the king as usual that day, when suddenly he said St. Nicholas appeared to him, and whisked him up and away and sat him back in his own country, and bringing him home to his parents.

There are other stories of him appearing when children were in trouble and helping them.

Many Christmas traditions center around St. Nicholas.

The giving of gifts secretly, the hanging of stockings, and old Saint Nick himself, in his service to the Lord has become a part of Christmas.

A small part of an unsigned editorial Sept. 21, 1897.

The work of veteran newsman

Francis Pharcellus Church.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle  
and see what makes the noise inside,  
but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the  
united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith,  
fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the  
supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there  
is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now,  
Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the  
heart of childhood.