

0. SAINT NICHOLAS, GIVER OF GIFTS - Story Preface

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This image depicts St. Nicholas as imagined by a painter of Russian icons. Included are reported (or legendary) scenes from his life. From the late 1400s or early 1500s., the work is now maintained by the National Museum, in Stockholm. Photo of original by Bjoertvedt; license: CC BY-SA 3.0. Click on the image for a better view.

When he died on December 6 (the exact year varies depending on the account), Nicholas was buried in his church at Myra. During the ensuing years, it was damaged, destroyed, repaired and restored. When Muslims raided the town in 1034, the church was completely razed.

Not content to have the remains of the saint stay in Myra, Italians raided his tomb on April 20, 1087 and carried off some of his bones to Bari, Italy. They now rest in the Basilica of St. Nicholas in Bari.

By the Middle Ages, churches all over Europe were named after St. Nicholas. He was made a saint by the Catholic Church and his feast day celebrated on the anniversary of his death: December 6. That day eventually became a time to give gifts, especially to children.

How did this generous man, who loved and protected children, evolve from the legendary provider of doweries to the annual visitor of chimneys? His transformation takes some interesting turns, depending on the country one visits.

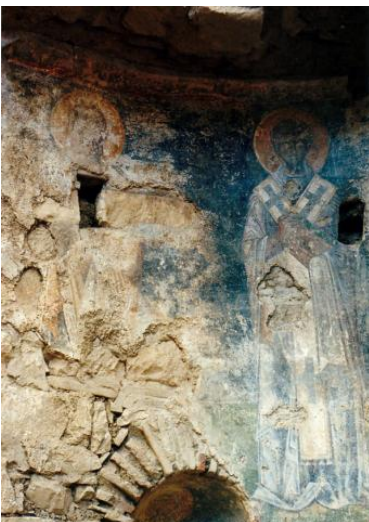
See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SAINT-NICHOLAS-GIVER-OF-GIFTS-Santa-Claus)

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Media Stream



Nicholas Grave Site

Image online, courtesy the cultuurnl.hyves.nl blog site.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Nicholas-Grave-Site>



Myra - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy the [Christmas in Turkey Website](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Myra-Map-Locator>



St. Nicholas Church at Myra

Image online, courtesy the kolaks.net website.

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Bari, Italy - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy members.peak.org website.

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St. Nicholas Tomb at Bari

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Basilica of St. Nicholas

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