



JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK

MONDAY – 12/4/2006

HOW DID “*SANTA CLAUS*” ORIGINATE? PART 1

One can say that the story of “*Santa Claus*” begins with Nicholas, who was born in 271 AD in the Greek village of Patara (now part of Turkey). His wealthy parents raised him to be a devout Christian, and throughout his life he followed the basic tenant to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor." He dedicated his life to serving God and became Archbishop of Myra.

Although Bishop Nicholas was persecuted and imprisoned for his faith under the Roman Emperor, Diocletian, he lived to a ripe old age and died peacefully in his own bed. At a time when most saints earned their place in heaven by dying for their faith in manners most unusual and cruel, this definitely made him stand out and definitely aided to his 'popularity' in every sense of the word.

The Feast of Sinterklaas (Dutch / Flemish), or St. Nicholas' Feast Day, December 6th is observed in most Roman Catholic countries primarily as a feast for small children. In fact, it was the early Dutch Protestants of New Amsterdam who converted the popish saint into a Nordic magician (Santa Claus = Sint Klaes = Saint Nicholas), who brings gifts to children for a merry holiday festivity.

Moment of Zen: Santa Claus = An American Symbol of Christmas