

From a real person comes a new character that would lead many people from the paths of celebration to the horrors of over-spending, debt, and the insanity of buying endlessly in the name of chubby jolly old man that really had no real role in life but giving presents (via the usual channels of others, hardly tossing gold coins around as did his originator.)

The real issue, of course, historically and in a faith-based approach, is that Holy Nicholas leads people to the Manger; that cold cave in Bethlehem, where Mary and Joseph would cradle the Messiah, the Son of God, on the day we call Christmas.

Santa leads to Santa.

Santa (Saint) Claus (Nicholas) needs to reclaim his rightful name, vesture and purpose to help transform our often greedy world, to a place where sharing is the least we can do to support each other. Poverty is hitting hard and in places once thought of as being immune, maybe just next door!

St Nicholas is the patron saint of children, sailors, bakers, those in prison, unwed women and many others. He wears the cope (cape) of a bishop and the hat called a mitre. He carries the bishop's stick, a crosier, and makes quite an entrance indeed.

He represents the joy of giving but also of discipline as he quizzes children as to their behaviour and studies.

A secular world rejoices in the Santa Claus image as an avoidance of the truth of Christmas. Yet in some places, where St Nicholas is re-emerging, leaders realise this Santa is a saint, and they often react. In France children normally receive chocolates in the shape of a Bishop. Some years back it was thought to be too religious, thus they were not allowed to be given at schools!

In England there are over 400 churches called St Nicholas and in France there are 20 plus villages named for the saint.

We ignore St Nicholas at our peril, as someday we may awaken to the news that Christmas will be forbidden (as in Puritan days when people celebrated in secret). Is this an exaggeration, look around? Time will tell.

Visit: www.stnicholascentre.org for all you need to know about St Nick, and consider joining the St Nicholas Society to help spread the word.
<http://saintnicholassocietyuk.yolasite.com>

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