

## St. Nicholas – December 6

The children's festival of St. Nicholas is primarily celebrated on December 6 throughout Europe. Nicholas was both in Asia Minor in the fourth century and grew up to become the Bishop of Myra. Not much is known about Nicholas. Legends about him tell us that he was a generous man and apparently gave three bags of gold to a poor man so the man's three daughters would have dowries to marry.

St. Nicholas Day give us a way to celebrate charity and to reflect on our ability to give without expecting something in return. God gave us Jesus as a gift. Through our gift of life, we are called to become a gift for others. Below is a *Speculatus* (St. Nicholas cookies from Holland). Families can bake them together and then take them to long-term care facilities, homeless shelters or elderly neighbors. Children learn the joy of giving without expecting anything in return through this simple act.

### St. Nicholas Cookies (*Speculatus*)

1 cup butter	4 tsp. cinnamon
1 cup shortening	½ tsp. nutmeg
2 cups brown sugar	½ tsp. cloves
½ cup sour cream	4 ½ cups sifted flour
½ tsp. baking soda	½ cup chopped nuts

Cream butter, lard, sugar. Add sour cream alternately with sifted dry ingredients. Stir in nuts. Knead dough and form into rolls. Wrap rolls in waxed paper and chill in refrigerator overnight. Roll thin. Cut into shapes of St. Nicholas. Bake in moderate oven 10-15 minutes.

*Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to earth to show us how to live. We are getting ready to celebrate your birthday on Christmas. St. Nicholas teaches us that it is better to give than to receive. Bless these cookies and those who will eat them. Help us all to remember that you are the greatest gift of all. Amen.*