

Der Heilige Nikolaus – Saint Nicholas

For a long time in Austria and in some regions of Germany, particularly in Bavaria, St. Nicholas was the main character in the Christmas celebration.

Saint Nicholas (**Sankt Nikolaus** or **der Heilige Nikolaus**) was probably born around 245 C.E. in the port city of Patara in what we now call Turkey. He later became the Bishop of Myra and the patron saint of children, sailors, students, teachers, and merchants. He is credited with several miracles and his feast day is **December 6**, which is the main reason why he is associated with Christmas. In Austria, parts of Germany and Switzerland, **der Heilige Nikolaus** brings his gifts for children on **Nikolaustag**, December 6.



Saint Nicholas is dressed like a bishop in a white garment and usually arrives with a companion. His companion goes by many names, depending on the region, but mainly his companion is called **Krampus**. Nicholas' companion is usually ominous looking, and a rough, dark character. In some cases, the figure frightens children both with its monstrous appearance and its threatening behaviour - like a devil. The Krampus is evil – it frightens little children and sometimes even whips them with a



switch (*Rute*). **Der Heilige Nikolaus** and his **Krampus** go from house to house and bring small gifts to children.

In some places, children place near the door on (Dec. 6) they discover small shoes, left by Saint Nicholas. list for Saint Nicholas to pass



their shoes on the window board or December 5. The next morning gifts and goodies stuffed into the The children may also leave a wish on to the **Christkind** for Christmas.

Scan the QR Code for watching a video of Nikolaus and Krampus on a visit:

