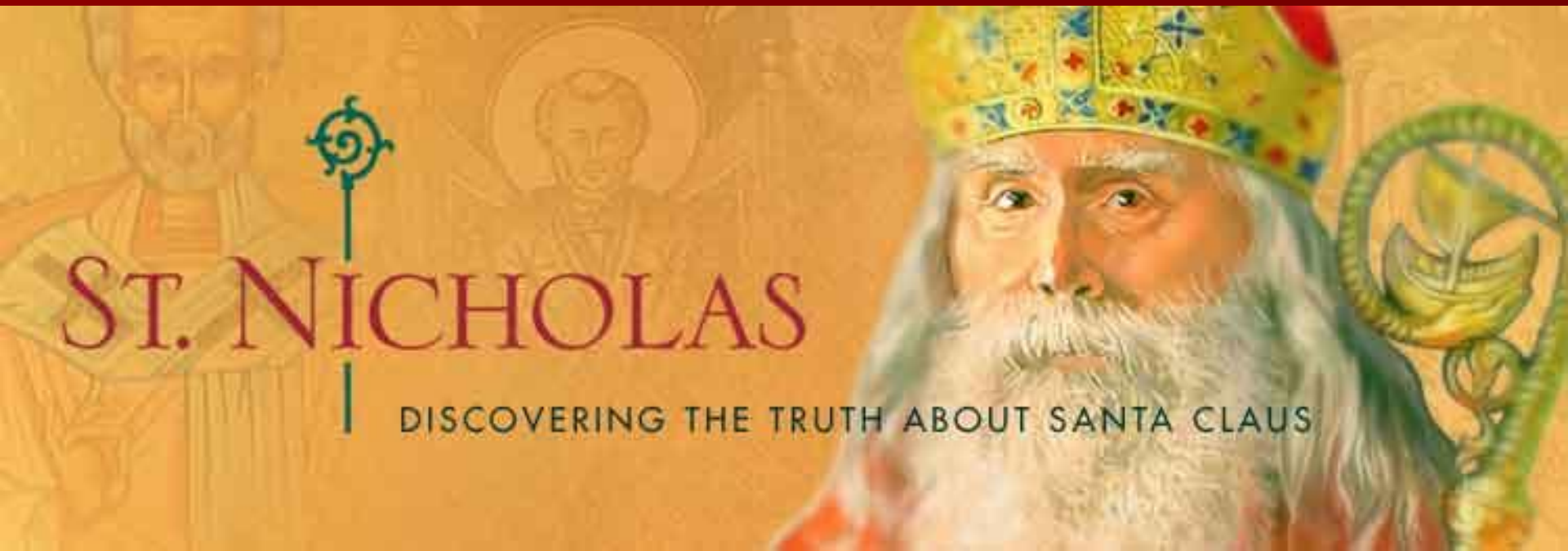


Traditions in Germany



In Roman Catholic areas of southern Germany, such as Bavaria, Saint Nicolas still comes as a man with a flowing beard and a bishop's mitre and staff.





Many children put a boot called *Nikolaus-Stiefel* (*Nikolaus boot*) outside the front door on the night of December 5 to December 6.

**St. Nicholas
fills the boot
with gifts and
sweets, and at
the same time
checks up on
the children to
see if they
were good,
polite and
helpful the
last year.**





Sometimes a disguised Nikolaus also visits the children at school or in their homes and asks them if they have been good (sometimes ostensibly checking his golden book for their record), handing out presents on a per-behaviour basis. But for many children, Nikolaus also elicited fear, as he was often accompanied by *Knecht Ruprecht* (*Servant Ruprecht*), who would threaten to beat, or sometimes actually beat the children for misbehaviour.