



# St Nicholas News

**A communication channel to get in touch with the Saint Nicholas' Friends around the World**

**6**

**December 15th, 2010**

**By Fr. Gerardo Cioffari, o.p. director of the**

**CENTRO STUDI NICOLAIANI**

**Bari-Italy,**

## **THE CELEBRATION**

### **OF ST NICHOLAS IN BARI WAS ATTENDED BY A LARGE CROWD.**

This year there was no invited great personality to convey popular attention. It has been a feast of all the categories of people, included the pilgrims who normally come to Bari only for the feast of the Translation (7-8-9<sup>th</sup> of May). For the first time after some decades the Basilica wasn't closed in the night between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, although the first Holy Mass was as usually at 5 a.m. Especially attended has been the collecting of manna (myron) at the end of the Mass celebrated by the Archbishop of Bari, Francesco Cacucci.

## **SINTERKLAAS LEXICON**

### **SINTERKLAAS VAN A TOT Z IS THE LAST WORK OF MARIE-JOSÉ WOUTERS,**

The book of 376 pages, that appears as a little "Summa" about Santa Claus, has been published in 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2009 Haarlem) and written in Dutch language. The proceeding follows that of a Dictionary or an Encyclopaedia. Therefore every item or subject can be found according its alphabetical order.

The reader can find in it a broad spectrum of information on Santa Claus traditions around the World, with a particular eye to Dutch traditions. In spite of the language and the subject, the book presents a particular interest because of the rich

amount of illustrations that constitute real archives not only about the figure of Santa Claus, but on the Saint as well. This aspect, of more space dedicated to the historical figure of the Saint and to other traditions (besides the Dutch one), characterizes this second edition.

## **JUDICIAL PILGRIMAGES**

### **FROM FLANDERS TO ST NICHOLAS OF BARI AND SANTIAGO OF COMPOSTELLA AND OTHER SANCTUARIES (XIV-XV CENTURIES)**

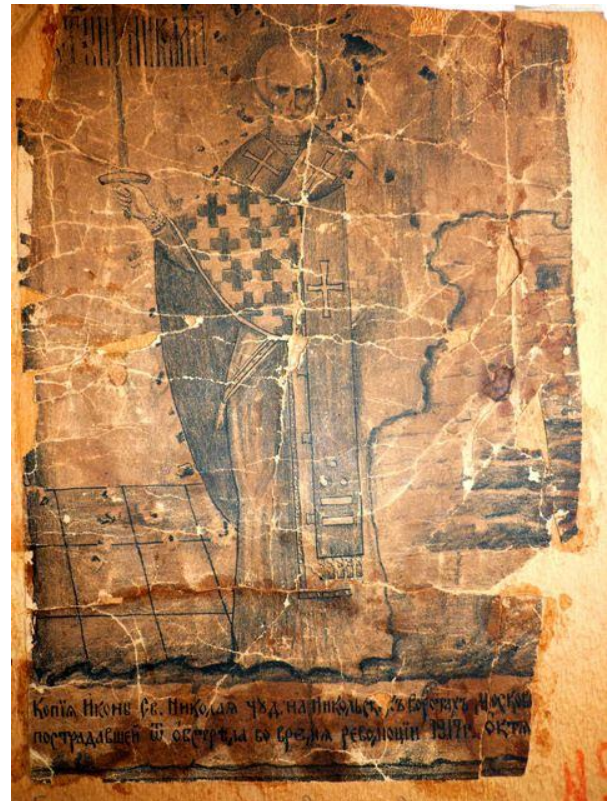
Sponsored by the Italian Centre of Compostellan Studies and the University of Perugia this book of 400 pages by Lorenza Vantaggiato goes into depth dealing with a very particular aspect of St Nicholas cult: the pilgrimage to Bari as a substitute for a death sentence. This was a special custom in Flanders of XIV-XVI centuries. The pilgrim used to come to Bari and present himself to the civil and religious authority. The Canons guardian of St Nicholas relics issued a certificate to the condemned-pilgrim attesting his arrival and prayers on the holy shrine.

Not only the author gives a complete spectrum of situations both from the documentary and bibliographical point of view, but guides the reader into the social context of Flanders and Gand, considering some of these pilgrimages as a channel towards the reconciliation of preeminent families at war with each other.

**WHEN EVERYBODY THOUGHT  
THAT IT WAS DEFINITELY LOST, HERE  
RISES OUT OF THE ASHES OF  
COMMUNISM THE SEVERE ICON OF  
ST NICHOLAS WHO LOOKS AT MOSCOW  
RED SQUARE**

St. Nicholas Tower is one of Moscow Kremlin Towers giving onto the Red Square. The road that starts from it ends to the Church of St Nicholas the Old. At the end of XV century an icon of the Saint was frescoed above this gate, that became famous for several historical events. The 1<sup>st</sup> of November 1612 through these gates entered the Kremlin Dmitrij Požarskij and Kozma Minin, the leaders of Russian liberation from the Polish. Few years later a new icon was superimposed. Breaking through the walls after having destroyed this gate (but the icon remained unharmed), started Napoleon in 1812 his retreat from Russia. The 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1918, while it was going on a workers' demonstration the red sheet that protected the icon ripped, according to what said an eyewitness. The Bolsheviks first covered it with a wire and then in 1937 plastered over, leaving the fresco under a thick stratus of stucco.

Everybody thought that the Bolsheviks had destroyed it and that it was lost forever. But it was not so.



A photo possessed by bishop Michael of Geneva and West Europe (here on the left) brought in 2007 some researchers to the idea that the icon could be still existing. A special interest showed in this the “Foundation of St Andrew the First Called”, whose president Vladimir Jakunin in 2007 promoted the research together with other Institutional leaders such Sergej Chlebnikov, Aleksandr Kibovskij, Helene Gagarina and Evgenij Murov.

Under the sponsorship of Vladimir Putin, Dmitrij Medvedev and Patriarch Kirill II discovering and restauration works continued till few months ago.

A sword in the right hand and a church or city in the left one, St Nicholas appears according the Možajsk type, that is like protector and defender of the Russian cities from enemy assaults. After such a long black-out he turns again his eyes towards the innermost part of the Country.