Sinterklaas - Saint Nicolas - Santaclaus

On the 5th of December the Dutch celebrate Sinterklaas, the birthday of a popular Saint called Sinterklaas. He is always is accompanied by his coloured helper Piet. Sinterklaas has been celebrated for centuries and it is one of the most popular festive traditions in our country.

If we reduce the celebration to its core definition, its **about right and wrong**. Sinterklaas being the Saint and the one who represents 'good' as well as an authority in how to behave, and his helper who punishes kids if they misbehaved.

Fortunately nowadays Piet is as popular as Sinterklaas and also Sinterklaas lost most of his original sterness. Both are loved, cherished and widely celebrated.

When looking into similar traditions in Europe, many parallels can be found.

Our Sinterklaas rides his white horse across the rooftops. This is a tradition shared with Norwegian mythology: Odin did the same.

German mythology led to offerings to the Gods through open fire. The children in the Netherlands offer water and bread at the fireplace in order to increase their chances of receiving gifts.

Countries like Luxemburg (Zinniklos or Kleeschen), the Czech Republic, France (Saint Nicolas), Austria (Nicolo), Germany (Sünnerklaas) and many more have similar traditions, that we know of.

Sinterklaas was banned in 1535 by Luther, but he never succeeded in ending the Sinterklaas tradition. It was even exported to the US by immigrants which led to the 'birth' of Santa Claus, who brings good cheer and Christmas presents.

Our suggestion is that it would be very interesting if you were willing to write down **the exact tradition in your town/country and if possible its history**.

Parallels and differences will emerge and give us all an educational and interesting impression of our **cultural differences and similarities** concerning the festivities of Sinterklaas.

We could publish a book/an e-book on the topic and thus inform our towns, schools and libraries.

It will be yet another inside look on our common heritage!