

This year, the radio station WGN720 AM in Chicago aired a program about

Christmas and made an error that many others have made. It referred to Santa Clause (Saint Nicholas) as a Turkish Bishop, and as a Catholic Bishop. The

letter below is a direct response to these two mistakes.

Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC)

A Non-Profit Organization Registered in the US
Representing 35,000 Hellenes and
34 Hellenic associations in the US and abroad

December 16, 2006

The following letter is in response to your recent radio program on Santa Clause. This is to respectfully inform you that the historic figure of Saint Nicholas upon whom Santa

Clause is based on, was neither a Catholic Bishop nor of Turkish descent. The

revered Saint was the Bishop of the town of Myra in Asia Minor during the fourth century.

Although technically Saint Nicholas can be claimed by the Catholic Church since he

lived in the period preceding the schism of 1054 when the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches split, Saint Nicholas should properly be identified as a Greek Orthodox Bishop since he resided in the Greek Empire of Byzantium.

The Ottoman Empire of the Turks made its first appearance in Anatolia in the eleventh century, over eight hundred years after Saint Nicholas passed on. Byzantium was a Greek Empire and Saint Nicholas was a Greek Bishop. We recognize that this was an honest error, and ask that WGN720 AM correct this mistake and

assert that Saint Nicholas was a Greek Bishop in the Byzantine Empire. In light of the fact that Turkish leaders in the twentieth century carried out a campaign of genocide against the Hellenic descendants of Saint Nicholas in Asia Minor and massacred Bishops and clergy who succeeded him in the Greek Orthodox Church, it is particularly disturbing for us to find Saint Nicholas and the Byzantine Empire to be mistaken with the Turkish conquerors.

We also wish to note that during Christmas 2000, the History Channel mistakenly called St. Nicolas a Turkish bishop, fact which they subsequently retracted and corrected <http://www.greece.org/themis/letter.jpg> In concluding, we wish to recall the recent visit of his holiness the Pope to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople. The Papal visit highlighted the precarious position of Christianity in Turkey. As such, in the interest of historical accuracy, we ask that your station correct the misstatements. Merry Christmas.

Respectfully,

On behalf of Hellenic Electronic Center (HEC) www.greece.org

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