



Of Seeds and Flowers



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Christmas Love

I remember my first Christmas adventure with Grandma. I was just a kid. I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," she jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her world-famous cinnamon buns. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true.

Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus!" she snorted. "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad. Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous, cinnamon bun. "Where" turned out to be Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days. "Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping. For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for. I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, the people who went to my church. I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class. Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out for recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough, and he didn't have a coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat! I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that.

"Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down. "Yes,"

I replied shyly. "It's for Bobby."

The nice lady smiled at me. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag and wished me a Merry Christmas.

That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat in Christmas paper and ribbons (a little tag fell out of the coat, and Grandma tucked it in her Bible) and wrote, "To Bobby, From Santa Claus" on it -- Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially one of Santa's helpers.



Grandma parked down the street from Bobby's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going." I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his doorbell and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobby.

Fifty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my Grandma, in Bobby Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were: ridiculous. Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team. I still have the Bible, with the tag tucked inside: \$19.95. *Anonymous*

A DROP OF RAIN...A BIT OF SUN

Christmas Message from Queen Elizabeth

In a largely secular age Her Majesty's faith remains central to everything she does: "For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none." That the annual royal broadcast remains relevant was demonstrated with some 8.3 million viewers, making it the third most popular Christmas broadcast.

DESIDERATA - "Things Desired"

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, **be gentle with yourself.**



You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life **keep peace with your soul.**

With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, *it is still a beautiful world.* Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Found in Old St Paul's Church. Baltimore; Dated 1760

"Mary, did you know that the Son *you delivered* would soon DELIVER YOU?"

"Rejoice in the Lord always! I say it again. Rejoice! Everyone should see how unselfish you are. *The Lord is near. Dismiss all anxiety from your minds.*" Philippians 4: 4-5.

VISION AND REALITY

All the feasts of the Church are beautiful. But Christmas has a tenderness a child-like sweetness that completely captivates the heart." Padre Pio

PREPARE WELL!

Christmas is such a gift! If you are *even feeling*, "*I can't wait until it is all over.*" Or, last year, in January, you even FELT or maybe said, "*I am glad it is all over.*" **STOP**, PLEASE STOP, **now** is the time to *slow down, simplify, reflect and pray on why you are doing what you are doing.* **Listen**; really listen to the words of the Christmas carols that truly express the meaning of the Incarnation. Can you identify with these words? Allow them to reverberate in your heart. The Father went to a lot of trouble to have His Son, like a bolt of lightning, penetrate and transform our history. -a marriage of God with humanity! Christmas is a most serious and most joyful event.

"There is such richness and goodness in the Nativity that *if we should see and deeply understand, we should be dissolved in perpetual joy.*" Martin Luther.

Christmas is the liturgical season of LIGHT; as Lent is the season of LIFE and Pentecost, the season of LOVE. You and I are called to be "Children of the Light". Let the LIGHT penetrate any of the darkness that is in your heart, **reveal it and heal it.** *Pray* that the LIGHT will penetrate all of the darkness in our culture, **reveal it and heal it.** WHAT A CHRISTMAS IT WILL BE, WHEN THE CHILD IS BORN ANEW IN YOUR HEART AND IN OUR NATION. MARANATHA! *Come, Lord Jesus!*

"What good is it to me if the eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly *but does not take place within myself?* What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to the Son of God, if I do not *also give birth to Him in my time and my culture?*" Meister Eckhart, 13th Cent. Christian Mystic.

"Be patient, my brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer awaits the precious yield of the soil. He looks forward to it patiently while the soil receives the winter and the spring rains. You, too, must be patient. Steady your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. *See!* James 5: 7-8

Last night, Cindy and I watched all four of the videos she has produced on our television rather than a smaller device. . What a difference it is to see the beautiful images and words on a big screen. TRY IT! -even if you have seen the videos before. They will feed your beautiful spirit. YOUTUBE: CINDYJOPFEIFFER is the site.

DEAR FRIENDS OF MARY'S FIELD: IT IS WITH SINCERE AND GRATEFUL HEARTS THAT WE WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A HAPPY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND A GRACE FILLED NEW YEAR!

WE THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF OUR LIVES AND MINISTRY: FOR READING AND SHARING "OF SEEDS AND FLOWERS, FOR YOUR PRAYERS THAT GIVE US NEW LIFE AND YOUR LOVING SUPPORT.

YOU ARE ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS, OUR LOVE AND DAILY PRAYERS!

MANY HUGS! MUCH LOVE!

BILL AND CINDY



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SPEAKING SOFTLY

"Make ready for Christ the Savior", shouts Thomas Merton, "whose smile, like lightning, sets free the song of everlasting glory that now sleeps in your, paper flesh, like dynamite."

"The only blind person at Christmas is he who has not Christmas in his heart."
Helen Keller

"I REJOICE IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF YOUR PRESENCE" Psalms

The closer you come to the Lord the more QUIET you become. -inside and out!



CHRISTMAS

*If our greatest need had been information,
God would have sent us an educator.
If our greatest need had been technology,
God would have sent us a scientist.
If our greatest need had been money,
God would have sent us an economist.
If our greatest need had been pleasure,
God would have sent us an entertainer.
But our greatest need was forgiveness.
So God sent us a Savior.*

*What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring Him a lamb;
If I were a wise man,
I would do my part;
Yet what can I give Him?
Give Him my heart.*

Christina Rossetti

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