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The Truth About Santa Claus

By Arleen M. Kaptur

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Christmas carols evoke visions of holiday cheer and wonderful, tender family moments. There is "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas," a classic that has spanned the time of many generations. There are numerous books and articles written about Christmas, such as "Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus." A letter written by an 8-year-old New York girl received a national response from the newspaper she sent it to – The Sun.

Many young children struggle with the thought of Santa Claus. Some of their friends laugh at them for believing, and some parents go to great lengths to protect and preserve this belief in their small children.

In reality, young and old, would like to believe in a wonderful fantasy of magic and a touch of Holiday cheer. Truth is that with everyday life, adults get to be very skeptical and no longer hold on to childhood visions of sugarplums and jolly fellows coming down a chimney.

The concept of Santa Claus can be analyzed and taken apart – it can be examined, re-examined, and checked out twice again. Madison Avenue executives conceive new ways to promote the "magic" of the season to include childhood traditions and beliefs, and stores are filled to overflowing with replicas and manufactured versions. In reality, yes, there really is a Santa Claus. It is a most wondrous feeling of love, generosity, and devotion. As the editor of The Sun so aptly put it, "How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. There would be no child-like faith, no poetry, no romance...the light of childhood that fills the world would be extinguished without Santa Claus."

You don't have to "see" Santa to believe in what Santa stands for. As in religious beliefs and doctrines, not seeing and believing, trusting, is where faith abounds. Santa represents faith in a higher power than we will ever be, it is faith in mankind that in hearts throughout the world there is love and tenderness. Small children are to be cherished and adults can hold on to memories and beliefs from their past – knowing full well the scientific research that has proven these concepts as "not probable."

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However, no one can fully take away the "invisible", but very real feelings of faith, love, care and concern. Joy cannot be touched and neither can happiness. They are, however, very real and can be a part of each and every day. While all Holidays are not picture-perfect, no matter how meager or unadorned a Holiday may be, knowing and cherishing in your heart the belief in Santa Claus is truly a wonder – a part of life that we must hang on to forever and pass on to new generations. We must preserve the awe of fresh snow, unbelievable sunsets, and the warmth of holding someone's hand.

Irving Berlin write "White Christmas" during the warm years. It was so simple and yet so breathtakingly beautiful. Faith is really the same – it is basic, simple and yet will take your breath away with the reflection it creates of "good will" and "love."

Yes, there really is a Santa Claus and it beats in individual hearts and makes life wondrous and beautiful. We must all "wish" that this light this belief, goes on forever in the hearts of all

men/women/and children. It is a "light that must never be extinguished."

Happy Holidays and

ENJOY!

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Arleen has written numerous books, cookbooks, articles and Holiday newsletters:

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Mommy..Daddy..Is There A Santa Claus?

By Mark Bulleit

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Is there really a Santa Claus? Any parent who hasn't been faced with this question most likely will at some point. But how do you answer this? No one wants to crush a child's dreams of Santa and holiday magic.

Some kids, like me, are crushed at school when they hear from a classmate that they found all their presents under their parents' bed, thus, proving there really is no Santa. Then, reasoning sets in, which is about the time they begin to wonder why they have been told this fairy tale all this time as it was the truth.

So, is there truly a Santa Claus? Well, if you are in this position you will probably be glad to hear that the only true answer to this question is...yes, absolutely.

The name "Santa Claus" came from the Dutch "Sinter Klass" pronunciation of St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas was a Christian priest, who later became a bishop. He was a wealthy person, and traveled the country helping others, giving gifts of money and other presents. St. Nicholas chose to remain hidden while giving these gifts, so the children were told to go to sleep quickly or he would not come!

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One famous story is about a poor man who had no money to give to his three daughters on their wedding day. St. Nicholas dropped bags of gold into the stockings which the girls had left to dry by the fire. Ever since, children have hung up stockings on Christmas Eve hoping that they will be filled with gifts by Christmas morning.

According to the Catholics, a saint is one who lived such a holy life that, after dying and going to heaven, is still able to help people on earth.

In the 1500's people in England stopped worshipping St. Nicholas and favored another gift giving figure Father Christmas.

Now, no matter what your religious preference is or if you even believe in Saints, doesn't change that St. Nicholas represents a selfless act of giving. Rather it be material gifts, money where needed or the often most valuable gift of a little of your time, it's about the act of helping someone else for no other reason than just because they need it.

As St. Nicholas had figured out as a young man, we truly, as adults, begin to understand Santa Claus when we realize that the best gift of all is not on the receiving end, but being the one giving. And being rich doesn't always mean having a lot of money. Often, especially these days, taking the time to spend with someone, inviting them over for dinner or even putting food on their table, can make all the difference.

But how do we explain this to a child? Well, we do it in stages. They first have to learn how much receiving a gift meant to them to understand how much it means to others. And Santa Claus, well he is

a perception of a truly magical holiday spirit presented to them in a way with which they can associate at this point in their lives.

So, how do we, as parents, answer this question in a way our young children will understand? You, as a parent, should decide when it's time to come clean. You can meter this by deciding when you feel they will understand that Santa Claus really does exist in all of us and he often means something different to each person they'll meet. A child grasping this is a big step towards learning what the holidays are truly all about.

Mark Bulleit is the developer/co-founder of the popular GreetingsFromSanta.com offering personal letters from Santa. Light up your child's face like never before this season. Happy holidays from <http://www.GreetingsFromSanta.com>.



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