



CHRISTMAS—1976

What do you do when your children find out there is no real Santa Claus? That happened to us earlier this summer when our 11-year-old, Amy, came up to me one day and said, "Dad, I know there is no Santa Claus. Could I help you play him this year?"

Two things happened to Millie and me as I recall. One was that we realized we were getting older, and two, we wondered what Christmas would be like this year when both of our children knew Santa Claus was something other than that jolly white bearded fellow in his gleaming red suit who mysteriously visited each home once a year sometime during the night of December 24.

Even though Christmas is just a few days away, I can tell you right now a new dimension to this great happening has occurred. The kids have looked forward to picking up a few gifts, and we have had just as much fun shopping for them. What we thought might turn out to be somewhat of a letdown for our younger daughter turned out to be an exciting new experience for her.

More importantly, however, has come a realization that Christmas is so much more than just exchanging gifts with those you love. The following poem, I feel, describes in much better terms than I can write the real meaning of Christmas. It's titled, "The Gifts of the Christ Child" and was written by Louise Wardwell.

"The little Christ Child came with gifts
For every girl and boy.
For every man and woman, too,
He brought the gift of joy.

"The brightest star that ever beamed
Shone on that holy night.
Into the darkness of man's fears
He brought the gift of light.

"With promise of eternal life
To all who would believe,
He brought the wondrous gift of hope
And bade all men receive.

"And then the greatest gift of all
Came down from heaven above,
A brotherhood to all mankind. . .
He brought the gift of love.

"And all men of goodwill He blessed
With faith that would increase
To fill men's hearts for evermore.
He brought the gift of peace.

"I have no worthy gifts to give,
But treasures rich and rare—
The joy, the light, hope, love, and peace
He gave to me, I'll share."

It is once again that most wonderful time of the year. May each of you have the gladness of Christmas which is hope; the spirit of Christmas which is peace, and the heart of Christmas which is love.

R. E. Krauss

