

# A Most Wonderful Christmas



*Each year we  
(Linda and Ralph)  
receive a Christmas  
message from a former  
colleague who worked  
in the State of New  
Jersey Department of  
Community Affairs  
Housing Division.*

*He defies the stereotype  
of a "state employee"  
and exemplifies the  
deep sense of  
spirituality unbur-  
dened by doctrine.*

*We share this gift  
with you!*

## Christmas Blessings!

I hope that all my precious friends are doing well. I wish you comfort and safety wherever you are. The game of life has become a bit more difficult to navigate of late.

No one could have imagined today's world. It seems that the evil in this world has created more and more uncertainty and challenge to our daily lives. Not-to-mention, a definite windfall for the pharmaceuticals that provide depression and anxiety medication.

I feel that most have had to endure some added stress for a long time. Seems that greed, selfishness, indifference, prejudice, narcissism and violence, etc, not-to-mention all the health concerns of the pandemic and such, have overwhelmed this world of ours. As we approach a wonderful holiday, we must look to faith, but especially to hope, during these trying times.

Hope makes all things easier to bear. We must be patient to the truth, and have confidence to rise above. Whether we find joy and success in any of life's struggles, is largely dependent on our ability to understand, and to persevere through any adversity.

It is during our darkest hours that we discover the true strength within us. Gandhi once said *The soul needs faith just like the body needs blood.* It is better to have faith and hope, than to be sad and in despair. I pray that soon our lives will once again reach the normalcy that once was.

It is important that we endure for the sake of ourselves and our families. Never waste a moment, no matter what stands in the way. Always love life and take time to enjoy its beauty.

Remember, we all affect the world every day, whether we mean to or not. Our actions and our states-of-mind matter, since we are all so deeply interconnected with one another. Working in our own consciousness is the most important thing to do at any moment. And loving one another is a supreme necessity, though sharing and love seem to be waning these days.

But the wonderment of Christmas helps us forget the troubled world around us. This Christmas season, be sure to count all your blessings, as there are more than you think. You yourself are a blessing to many.

There are some people who find it so difficult to be happy. They refuse to let go of things that make them sad. Thanksgiving gives us the opportunity to look inside ourselves, to be grateful for what is in our lives, and to give thanks for our successes. We are indeed successful in life when we are surrounded by a loving family and great friends.

The most beautiful of holiday seasons is again close-at-hand. The time between Thanksgiving Day and the New Year is a most joyous time, with Christmas Day always being the most blessed of all.

# A Reflection

It is love that provides the Christmas magic. As we share the special magic with our children, it spreads to all others, because the greatest gift is the family. As the seasons of life pass us by, we are comforted through our journey by the memories and moments shared with our families and friends.

We also keep a special place in our hearts to remember all the beautiful times we shared with those no longer with us. We must take the time to share laughter and tears, caring and love, and create special moments to later recall. Remember, we are all here for a short time.

Always enjoy life in the present, for the stories of our very lives are written moment-to-moment, by the way we share and touch the lives of others. Treasure every moment like a child treasures that first toy, or its mother's arms. We are reminded by the first Christmas, how a new life brought the world together.

So, too, each Christmas creates new life in all of us. It is the child that brings us closer.

The real Christmas magic is silent. You can't hear it, but you feel it in your soul. When you sit with your children on Christmas morning, start by telling them you love them very much. Then, while they unwrap their treasures, concentrate on the sounds in the room. There's the magic! The innocence, the joy, the simplicity, makes you forget all your troubles. Heaven's melody puts all of life into perspective.

We become aware that we are here for something greater than ourselves. We must make the world more meaningful while we are here. We only get one chance at it. When we give others our love, our care, our honesty, our respect, passion, vulnerability and helping hand, we are one with Christmas, and happiness shines in our hearts.

I realize that everyone hurts and cries sometimes. But remember that every blade of grass, every raindrop, every star in the sky, is a miracle of life in motion.

And, you and I are products of that miracle. We share a common thread on this earth. It is God's most precious blessing. Sharing the joy of life is a thanksgiving to that blessing. Share a smile and discover the real magic of the holiday. Christmas isn't about the gifts, candy canes or lights. It is about the hearts we touch when we give of ourselves to others.

Winston Churchill once said, *We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.* The magic of the holidays is to brighten another's life. Most people in life, no matter how happy they seem on the outside, often carry a piece of a broken heart.

Good friends do something to your heart and soul. They change the way you feel about life around you, about the everyday ups and downs, about yourself. When the world gets me down, I close my eyes and I search for a time of my youth, where there was laughter and song, in a more innocent setting. Our hearts grow stronger, and we become better when we become that child again.

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We can see all of humanity in the face of a child, as the Christmas heart relives the joys of childhood. When the children unwrap their gifts on Christmas morning, do not rush it, and do not clean up the mess too quickly. Take the time to reflect on how you've grown. I never take for granted the blessings I've been given. I could not wish for more in life; having a loving family, wonderful friends and peace of heart. You yourself were a special Christmas gift to me when our paths first crossed. Take time this Christmas to recognize all the special people you've been blessed to know.

# A Most Wonderful Christmas

Become that child again! The childhood fantasies that brought us joy are never lost, but depressed as we grow older. It seems that somewhere between child and adult, we've become too grown up to remember the simple things that made our world enjoyable. To better understand Christmas, we have to revive that wonderment and become that joyful child again.

Remember the special times of our youth; the laughter, the love, the dreams, the excitement of Christmas morn, and waiting up on Christmas Eve to catch a glimpse of Santa and his reindeer. We must believe in miracles. Christmas is a special time, and we are those children. To enjoy true happiness, you need a grateful heart. Every time we love, and every time we give, it is Christmas.

It is not just the people who come and go in life, but the heart's many faces and forms that steer us. It is not just the passing of years, but a total gathering of love and life, and the wisdom gained in living. Stay positive, and never be against yourself. Invite goodness into your life, and never compare or measure yourself against anyone else.

Above all, be patient in your journey, and never regret life. You are so unique and a special creation. There is no one else like you. You are a fingerprint of God. I find that what you choose to believe in, you become. Always choose through faith. Christmas is the beginning of new hope.

Honor it, and keep it in your heart all year round, because on the road of life, it is not where you're going that is most important, but who is by your side. Family beside you and health inside you, and holding precious the special memories of all the yesterdays gone by, is what I believe will get us through the journey.

There is a divine plan to life. We don't meet our friends by accident. Christmas brings families and friends together like no other day. It helps us appreciate the love in our lives that we often take for granted.

There is no greater gift at Christmas than to have everything before we open the presents. I feel very sorry for people who have no friends. It's been said that to be without friends is a serious form of poverty. We know life isn't fair, but it is always good. I'm very grateful for the times that we shared through the years, as well as the memories I'm allowed to keep.

Laugh as you've always laughed. Play and smile. Whatever we were as friends before, we are still, no matter the distance or the passage of time. That is what matters.

The simplest things in life give off the greatest glow of heart and happiness. Things like a moonlit night, a soft kiss, a baby's warmth, a gentle hug, and the rhythm of a heartbeat. We must continue to give thanks to this wonderful world, and everything it holds for each of us.

The embodiment of Christmas is not the presents, but the people we share it with. Things we take for granted are those that seem to always deserve our deepest gratitude. Remember, we do not accomplish anything in this world alone.

Now the earth has grown older with all its burdens. However, the Christmas spirit always remains young. Until we feel that spirit in our heart, there is no Christmas. It isn't the snow, the holly or the wrappings under the tree. It's the warmth of the Christmas heart that always brings us closer and gives us peace. On Christmas night, if we watch and listen closely to all the goodness surrounding us, we feel transported back to a time long ago. We see the faces of those we once knew, the special memories of our families and friends.

The day makes us think of everyone and everything we ever loved. Nothing we do in life makes sense if we do not touch the hearts of others while we go through it. I want to thank you for adding meaning to my journey.

# A Reflection

No matter how old we get, we should view Christmas as a new beginning each year. It is a time of red, white and green rainbows, signaling that another year has come to pass. And when the holy day arrives, it is as if time stands still. It allows us to take stock of our own worth.

Picture that first Christmas – a crystal blue sky, a baby's cry in the night, and the miracle of a world united in peace and harmony. How grand life is! To walk through it is a wonderful experience like no other. Feel the music in your heart, admire a sunset at the close of day, listen to the sweet rhythm of a cricket's song, experience the silence of a starlit night, share the warmth of a glowing fireplace, sense the fragrance of early morning, and the calming peace of a dear friend's voice. We have to constantly remember who and where we are.

Keep Thanksgiving and Christmas perpetually in your hearts. Think of the privilege of waking each morning and realizing the wonders you possess, and the power to be happy. Joy does not happen to us automatically. We have to choose it. Our souls are most alive when we relish the simple things in life, like the comfort of a gentle hug, the serenity of a clear blue lake, the softness of the falling snow, a painted rainbow sky, the smile on the face of a child, and the love of someone dear. All of these bring joy to our very souls. We all need that daily hug to affirm that all will be okay. Whenever we give someone a present, or sing a song, or touch someone with a smile, we become Christmas.

Sometimes during the day, my thoughts bring me back to a time when we stood together. And sometimes I find that I miss the smiles and the laughter of yesteryear. However, I treasure dearly those special moments we shared. I thank heaven for allowing me to share the journey with such good friends. You are a gift of heaven's doing. Never let the smiles fade.

We must continue to laugh daily, for laughter is a poison to fear. This year has been a rough one for many, I'm sure. We pray that life's path becomes easier for all. May the magical season of Yuletide and the new year come to you blessed with good for-

tune and health. May you never need more than a smile to make your day, while enjoying every day to its fullest.

Our paths may never cross again. And if they don't, I will cry enough tears for all of us. However, I will always treasure the memories made along the way. If I should leave this world tomorrow, I stand eternally grateful for having known you, and thankful to heaven above for allowing our paths to cross in life, and for sharing a few moments in time.

I wish you and your precious families God's love and peace always. I pray for the healing of all hearts everywhere, as well as wishing an answer to your every prayer.

In closing, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all. This holiday season, may all our friends and families, who need a miracle, be blessed by the power of God. May all who have heavy burdens have their load lightened. And may your life always be filled with health, happiness and joy.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MY BLESSED FRIENDS!

