



Dear, good Santa Claus ...

Never in living memory has Santa Claus been so perplexed as this year. For hundreds of years he had been used to receiving a lot of mail from all regions of the world with gift wishes in the weeks and months before Christmas. Mostly it was children who wrote to him, because hardly any adults believed in Santa Claus.

The majority of the incoming letters contained lists of individual wishes. Often, however, long handwritten letters were enclosed, sometimes very personal; sometimes they gave him an insight into a poignant fate or even into life circumstances that should have been reported to the Youth Welfare Office. But he had received a clear order from God to take care only of his specific tasks as Santa Claus and not to interfere in worldly areas of responsibility. This was always difficult for him. In some cases, however, he had made a note of a letter addressed to him and passed it on in the heavenly hierarchy in the hope that some angel would take care of it.

As a good Santa Claus, he always had so much to do in the weeks immediately before Christmas that he was completely finished on the second holiday, could only empty a huge glass of heavenly punch and sink into sleep for a few weeks, only to be busy again with the pre-orders and new preparations for the next Christmas from Easter at the latest.

This year, with the memorable number 2020, everything had gone differently. First, it had taken a strangely long time for him to receive the first letters. He was already worried: Does no one believe in Santa Claus anymore? Or is it just the postal service that's on strike? Or is it digitalization? He had neither an e-mail-account nor a Smartphone; heaven was still behind the moon in this respect. During the last celestial budget negotiations, he had asked God through his financial angel when a connection of heaven to the worldly digital network could be expected. But he had only waved him off, and the angels' union had even protested against it.

When Santa Claus received the first letters around the middle of 2020, they came almost exclusively from adult people and very few from children. Not a single list with material gift wishes for Christmas had arrived so far. All wished the same: "Dear, good Santa Claus, make it again as it was once before Corona!"

After reading the first hundred of these letters, he made an appointment with God. The very next day, Santa was summoned to God. Excited, he told Him about these strange letters and curiously asked, "What on earth is going on? Don't people need anything anymore?" God stroked his long beard, long since no longer white but greying from worry, and fell meaningfully silent. The two angels on watch cleared their throats in boredom, whereupon God indicated them that they could call it a day.

When the angels had closed the door behind them, God spoke, "Santa Claus, I'm sorry to tell you that people are annoying me. I am at my wits' end with my heavenly Latin. Once I gave people their minds, just as I gave them arms and legs and internal organs. For thousands of years they have used everything to subjugate the earth. They have successfully tilled the soil, killed animals for their own consumption and developed new technical possibilities to make life easier for themselves. Somehow it always went upward for them. But they also fought enormous wars. They did not use their intellect only for the good of the world. Nevertheless, I have kept my faith in people. In the meantime, they use digitalization to fight against humanity; they make everything much more complicated than it already is. Dishonesty, greed and selfishness are spreading more and more like a plague. There are actually people who are of the opinion that man can completely overcome nature by means of artificial intelligence. Is this the way to treat nature? The very cocky are even already talking about an "Anthropocene". For a few decades I have already had doubts about man and now it has become clear to me that the dictatorship of man on earth cannot go on like this. They want to play creator

themselves. I cannot allow that! I had to intervene to regulate. Now I must invite to a heavenly crisis conference. Together with Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and all other religious founders, we will form a World Future Commission, and it would be nice if we could count on your support, even though you will probably soon have to declare short-time work. My suggestion is not to abolish the world completely yet, but to let a short "Anthropocene" first be followed by a much longer "Virocene", so that nature can recover from the "human disease". Viruses are just as selfish as humans, but they do not become megalomaniacs due to their lack of mental power and are therefore easier to control. Perhaps, just to be on the safe side, we can implant a genetic sequence for compassion and responsibility into the viruses. - In any case, it's a good thing that I hesitated for so long with the digitization of the heaven. Who knows what that would have done to us here?" God was still holding onto his beard. Then it suddenly became clear to Santa Claus why the Muslims always say, "By the beard of the Prophet"

After sadly saying goodbye to God, Santa Claus stopped by the heavenly post office again to pick up the latest Christmas letters. Although it was Sunday, when the secular post offices forward significantly fewer letters, there was barely enough room on his reindeer sleigh to carry the many mailbags. Hours later, together with the angels on watch, he had opened and pre-sorted everything. Again, almost all of the letters were from adults who wished for the pre-Corona days to be back. But one shipment was particularly out of the ordinary, because it was a very thick package from the United States, filled with completed ballots and a cover letter. It was from still-incumbent President Donald Trump, almost pleading with Santa Claus to deliver the ballots to the U.S. Election Commission on Christmas Eve. All the ballots were ticked for the Republicans. Santa Claus shook his head and thought to himself, "God is right!" And, "Viruses are messengers of God!"

After that, the last thing he reached for was a somewhat larger flat envelope from Germany that he had not yet opened. In a bad mood, he slit open the envelope and pulled out a flat bag, which he first put aside to read the accompanying letter. It read, "Dear Santa Claus, you don't have to give me anything this year. I just want my grandma to get well again. She says that she is already sooo old and that she doesn't understand the world at all anymore and that's why she wants to die soon. But I don't want that! So I recently got three FFP2 masks for her from the pharmacy with her ID card. But she only wanted one of them. That's why I'm sending you the other two now, so that you don't catch anything on earth and stay healthy. Yours, Bine."

Touched, Santa Claus put this letter aside, grabbed his own beard and decided to vigorously discuss God's plan again in the heavenly Crisis Commission and to make his own proposal, namely to provide the Corona vaccine with an RNA for honesty, peacefulness, empathy and responsibility. Satisfied with himself, he thought, "By the beard of the Prophet ...!" and allowed himself an especially large jug of heavenly punch for Christmas Day.

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