

Search for the Christ Child

Legend has it that an old grandmother named Babushka, a good woman, is about to retire for the evening when – out of the fierce winter night – a knock comes on her door.

It is the Wise Men, and they tell her excitedly about the King born in Bethlehem. They urge her to come and honor Him.

Babushka peeks out the door. It's an awful night, cold and blustery. Babushka looks back at her warm bed, hesitates, and says, "I will see the Christ Child tomorrow."

She returns to her bed and, lo, another knock at the door. This time, it's the shepherds urging her to come and, if not, at least to give them a basket of goodies to bring to the Christ Child.

Again, she looks at the weather, looks at her bed, hesitates, but finally replies, "I'll bring them myself – tomorrow."

Well, tomorrow comes and Babushka is as good as her word. She packs some food and off she goes to Bethlehem.

But when she arrives, the stable is empty. She is crestfallen, but determined.

She keeps looking. In fact, she looks for the Christ Child for the rest of her life, joining all the wanderers who have ever lived. And in her endless journey, she finds children, finds them everywhere. She finds many a manger. She finds many a cradle. She finds many a mother nursing her baby. She leaves gifts at each place, hoping that it is the Christ Child.

She is now very old and near death. As she lies dying, the Christ Child appears to her wearing the face of every child she has ever touched and offered them gifts.

Babushka dies happily, knowing that, in spite of her first hesitancy, she did, indeed, find the Christ Child – not in the manger in Bethlehem where she expected Him to be, but in the poor and needy where she never expected Him.

While the story is fictitious, it does highlight a spiritual truth.

The Christ Child, grown into a Man, told His followers how blessed are they who minister to the hungry, the thirsty, and those who are strangers and in prison.

"Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me," Jesus said.

As you consider Christmas and gift-giving, these are some presents you may offer to our Lord – and not just during this season, but all year long.

– Beecher Hunter