



## *Christmas message from Fr. Don Farnan*

On Christmas Eve, a young boy with light in his eyes looked deep into Santa's, to Santa's surprise, and said as he sat on Santa's broad knee, "I want your secret. Tell it to me." He leaned up and whispered in Santa's good ear, "How do you do it, year after year? I want to know how, as you travel about, giving gifts here and there, you never run out. How is it, dear, Santa, that in your pack of toys you have plenty for all the world's girls and boys? From rooftop to rooftop, to homes large and small, from nation to nation, reaching them all?" And Santa smiled kindly and said to the boy, "Don't ask me hard questions. Don't you want a toy?" But the child shook his head and Santa could see that he needed the answer. "Now listen to me." He told that young boy with light in his eyes, "My secret will make you sadder and wise. The truth is that my sack is magic. Inside it holds millions of toys for my Christmas Eve ride. But although I do visit each girl and boy, I don't always leave them a gaily wrapped toy. Some homes are desperate, and some homes are bad. Some homes have suffering and sorrow—it's sad. Some homes are broken, and the children there grieve. Those homes I visit, but what should I leave? My sleigh is filled with the happiest stuff, but for homes where despair lives, toys aren't enough. So, I tiptoe in, kiss each girl and boy and pray with them that they'll be given the joy of the Spirit of Christmas, the spirit that lives in the hearts of the dear child who gets not but gives.

If only God hears me and answers my prayer when I visit next year, what I will find there are homes filled with peace and giving and love and boys and girls gifted with light from above. It's a very hard task, my smart little brother, to give toys to some, and to give prayers to others. But the prayers are the best gifts, the best ones, indeed; for God has a way of meeting each need. That's part of the answer. The rest, my dear youth, is that my sack is magic, and that is the truth! In my sack I carry on Christmas Eve day more love than a Santa could ever give away. The sack never empties of love or the joys 'cuz inside it are prayers and hopes, not just toys. The more that I give, the fuller it seems because giving is my way of fulfilling our dreams. And do you know something? You've got a sack, too. It's as magic as mine, and it's inside of you. It never gets empty; it's full from the start. It's the center of light and love. It's your heart! And if, on this Christmas, you want to help me, don't be so concerned with the gifts 'neath your tree. Open the sack called your heart, and share your joy, your friendship, your wealth, your care." The light in the small boy's eyes was glowing. "Thanks for your secret. I've got to be going." "Wait, little boy," said Santa, "don't go! Will you share? Will you help? Will you use what you know?" And just for a moment that small boy stood still, touched his heart with his small hand and whispered: "I will!"

*Blessings,  
Fr. Don*