

## YES, VIRGINIA—THERE STILL IS.

By **Dr. Peter F. Folan**  
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In 1897, a little girl named Virginia asked a question, one as old as wonder, that is still asked today: *Is Santa Claus real?*

The New York Sun answered her with an editorial cherished ever since. Editor Francis Church responded not with proof, but with truth: “Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus...He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist.” Church reminded us that “the most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see.”

Those unseen forces—love, devotion, courage, fidelity—form the quiet architecture of a good life. Belief in what we cannot measure strengthens these virtues and draws them nearer to us. Santa is true in this deeper way: not because we glimpse him on rooftops, but because we encounter the love, he represents in the people who care for us.

Children sense this instinctively. Human beings are born believers, and through believing, they learn to see. Wonder is not childish; it is trust. It is the first awakening of the soul to what matters most. It is a return to what we most deeply desire.

A child’s world is awake with possibility. A snow-covered lawn sparks imagination. A candle flickers with meaning. A creak in the night becomes reindeer; a winter gust angels passing by. Children do not need to learn how to believe—they live it.

When we light a menorah or decorate a tree, when we tell stories of miracles or marvels, we are not merely passing along traditions—we are cultivating the capacity to notice the quiet magic woven through the world.

In doing so, we form in children the beginnings of reverence, gratitude, and goodness. Imagination is not an escape from reality; it is a return to its depths, where integrity grows and courage takes shape. Our stories and sacred symbols remind us that hope, faith, joy, and belonging are never far from our reach.

Believing in Santa is not childish. It is profoundly human. It reopens the heart. It reminds us that giving matters more than getting, and that unseen kindness has a lasting impact. Such beliefs nudge us toward love—and toward lives lifted by purpose.

I have seen Santa many times. I saw him in my father, who came home weary yet still arrived with

love. In my mother, a nurse who lingered past her shift to comfort. In my wife, a teacher whose quiet kindness meets people precisely where they are. In my closest friend who listens without haste. These are glimpses of grace—evidence that goodness is alive in the world, sometimes hidden, always present.

Whatever our tradition, each of us is invited into this mystery. We can all don the red suit, follow a guiding star, or light the final candle. We can choose to be the miracle—and live with hearts courageous enough to imagine something better and loving enough to begin it.

Our world aches for such noble pursuits, and for people willing to become bearers of goodness and joy. Let’s model this for our children. Let’s teach them how to believe, how to give, how to wonder. Let’s help them notice the good that surrounds them each day.

So yes, Virginia. And yes, all of us. There *is* a Santa Claus—and flames that refuse to fade, stars that guide our steps, and love that draws us beyond ourselves. A small flame glows in every one of us. Let’s tend it gently, share it generously, and let it shine brightly in this season of faith, hope, love, and joy.