

# A dose of compassion the best gift

By Roxanne Powers

Dear Santa,

I'm an elementary school teacher, and I'd like a new heart. No...my heart isn't damaged by disease, but it is broken, you see, Santa, just about every day. I see little people hurting so bad...all because of their very own classmates. Just last week, Santa, I found a little girl hiding in one of the restroom stalls crying and refusing to come out because classmates had taunted her for not having nice clothes. The hair around her little face was so saturated with tears that it was separated into several tight little strands. When I took her little hand into my own to try to coax her out of the stall, it was shaking. By the time I got her calmed down, I didn't know if her hair was more saturated with her own tears...or mine.

Yesterday, Santa, I saw two children hurting. First, I watched from a short distance away as a young father held his sobbing son to his chest and spoke in a quiet reassuring voice. I couldn't detect what he said, but I could swear I felt his chest constrict painfully even as his small son's heart beat wildly against his own. This particular child fell victim to his peers merely because he is of a much slighter build than most boys his age; the other children called him names that no human being should ever be called...yet, it is common today for children to call other children whom they consider less desirable than themselves by these horrible names.

The other child I saw hurting yesterday was a little child clinging so tightly to her mother that she seemed to be attempting to hide her chubby little body in the folds of her mother's skirt. Her mother cupped her daughter's face between her own loving hands, and as she looked into her little girl's beautiful blue eyes, she seemed to drown in the tears pooled there, until her own tears spilled down her cheeks, and the corners of her mouth gently twitched as she struggled to maintain composure.

I raised three children, Santa, and I know that physical pain is preferable to the kind of pain a parent feels when they must stand by and helplessly watch their child suffer the ridicule and rejection of others.

Santa, I guess what I'm really asking for is for parents to instill in their children the gift of compassion. I suppose many parents need to have that compassion for themselves first, because if they could just imagine how bad it hurts to see their own child convulsed in tears of pain from rejection, they would make sure that their child isn't the one doing the hurting.

Thank You  
For Reading  
The  
Progress.  
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You And  
Your  
Families  
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Season!

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