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Autor: Matteucci-Keller, Sylvie
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Christmas in New Zealand

The other day, I was gathering mauve roses in the garden that Heinz and Trix Jäggi, ever the very skilled gardeners, had lovingly raised to perfection. Frühling ist endlich da, dache ich mir. Enfin, le printemps! Mother duck was proudly leading eleven ducklings for a first swim around the fresh water spring I love to feast my eyes on. "It's Christmas time again!" I thought. Then I caught my breath: "Christmas? Isn't Christmas about sleighs and sleet?" I then realised that I have adjusted so well to New Zealand that I've come to take spring at Christmas time for granted.

Indeed, rushing around in our busy lives, we all tend to take people we have known for a long time, as well as things we use daily, for granted. Christmas is the time to stop taking our beloved for granted – we surprise them

with a big hug, we hide a carefully thought out gift to put under the tree, or into the sock. We make a special effort and let love, rather than habit, lead our actions.

I am trying to visualise each of you, in a shop or a field, at home or in an office: for a moment I'd like to stop you, press your hand, and wish you a Merry Christmas. Should you see me in the street, hurrying along in a cloud of duties, do please also stop me and give me a big smile. And let's for a moment celebrate together the special moment of Christmas.

Merry Christmas to you and your family, and a Happy New Year.

Sylvie Matteucci-Keller

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