

VORWEIHNACHTENSITTEN (PRE-CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS)

Brief an das Christkind / Letter to Christ Child

The more difficult requests come from children aged nine or ten who just ask for peace in the family or a job for their parents. "What do you tell a child when they write that someone in the family has died," asked the 52-year-old. In these cases there is no standard answer. "I just try to give a word of sympathy or a small piece of advice," said Dipper, who as an employee of the special Christmas post service based in the Villa von Issendorf works directly next door to Santa Claus himself.

Santa Claus starts his work in his grotto at the villa every year punctually on the Friday before the first Advent. But his arrival is more than a simple, quiet slip down the chimney –Santa Claus comes to Himmelpforten in a horse-drawn carriage, in a farm wagon flanked by angels and once in a vintage car.

"Many children hand their letters to Santa Claus personally," said Bernd Reimers, deputy mayor of the 5,000-person community and its designated commissioner of all things Christmas. Reimers initiated the 50-year anniversary of the "Christkindpostamt" after learning that post officers first started answering children's letters in their free time around 1952. "It wasn't until Bärbel's letter that the service officially started. That was when the media got hold of the story," said the 53-year-old. By now, Himmelpforten has patented its pseudo-name "Christkinddorf" ("Christmas Village"). According to Reimer's estimations, every year 30,000 visitors come to the 10-day Christmas market located around the Villa von Issendorf.

On November 27, he takes up his work for Santa Claus. Whoever wants to send a letter, should address it to "Christkindplatz 1, 21709, Himmelpforten, Germany." The dutiful helper wants to remind folks to "always remember a return address." Bärbel Rosendahl, thinking back to the days of her childhood, says it would make a believer out of anyone: "When an answer comes from Santa Claus, you believe."

Santa Claus Lives in Himmelpforten



Santa Claus' helpers at the Christkind post office

Special Seasonal Post Offices

