Holiday Gifts

By Andy Dibble

A man of Utopia received a Christmas gift from his wife, its “Happy Mother’s Day!” wrapping tattered and coffee-stained. Exhausted by the ritual of obligatory generosity, he opened it. She was dismayed because Utopians never open gifts. They re-gift every gift received unopened, so as to most efficiently perform the rite.

The wrapping disguised only an empty box. He smiled and said, “Thank you. I will cherish it always,” which is what everyone in Utopia says to seal the rite of gift-giving. But he spoke honestly because he knows receiving nothing is better than feigning gratitude for an empty gesture.