



Aid to the Church in Need
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Aid to the Church in Need is a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church and a
registered charity in England and Wales (1097984) and in Scotland (SC040748)



The Christmas Tree That Came Home

For children who have lost their home

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Proverbs Chapter 3: 5-6

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Illustrations by Mary Dunhill

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The Christmas Tree That Came Home

It was one of those nights when the stars clustered together to tell each other their news and glisten more brightly than they had ever before. And the trees in the forests murmured their approval and bowed majestically in the gentle breeze.

Those were the Christmas tree's thoughts as he lifted his head to the heavens standing on his toes and listening to the twinkling conversation taking place above him.

'Today is the day!' he thought. 'I know this is my home but I've always wanted an adventure. Today I'll leave and find out what lies beyond the hill!'

Slowly and surely he eased his feet full of roots out of the ground and crept down the hillside, making sure he didn't wake a soul.

His journey down the hill was long and his feet seemed to slip several times as the ground was damp from the snow of the night before. But the lights from the stars and the moon seemed to be beaming down their approval and were making his descent a sure start to his adventure.

At the bottom of the hill the Christmas tree saw a little house. It was a modest little home and through the night air he could hear the cattle and horses sleeping soundly in the surrounding fields.

'What a lovely place to live,' he thought and then started to yawn.

His journey down the long, long hill had been exhausting and now his tired root feet needed to rest.

And rest he did. He slept so long that he didn't open an eyelid even when the sun sent a long ray of warmth to prod him awake. Still he slept.

Suddenly, the door from the house opened and out ran Lorcan and his sister, Amber. 'Oh, what a beautiful Christmas tree!' exclaimed Amber.

'It has the greatest branches I've ever seen and stands so straight that I'm sure he could tell us what is happening for miles and miles around just with a blink of an eye!'

'Yes, he's the most princely tree I've ever seen too!' said Lorcan. 'Let's find a special scarf and wrap it around him.'



With that the brother and sister ran back into the house and found the brightest scarf they could and wrapped it around the Christmas tree. Oh, how beautiful the Christmas tree looked! The red scarf and his green branches seemed made for each other.

Lorcan and Amber were so happy with their new found friend that they played happily at his side and the sun sent her sunshine beams in even greater abundance. But the Christmas tree still slept.

It was only after Lorcan and Amber were asleep that night that the Christmas tree awoke and stretched his branches. His eyes fixed on the lovely scarf that the children had given him.

'What an adventure I'm having! I dreamt that I met two wonderful friends and I wake up to find I've been given a most beautiful red scarf. This will keep me warm on my journey.'

And with that he moved his root feet out in front of him and walked slowly through the yard and along the road.

On and on he walked what seemed like miles until in the distance he saw two bright headlights. It was a lorry. A massive lorry! And it was speeding past him. All he could do was stop. The lorry rumbled away and the Christmas tree then heard loud voices speaking words he couldn't understand.

The language they were speaking was completely unknown to him and the new words echoed loudly in the still night air. He heard boxes and crates being pushed around and realised that he was on the corner of a market place. Men and women were walking around, working in the night hours, setting up their stalls.

'Oh, I feel so lost and alone,' shivered the Christmas tree. 'My adventure is not how I imagined it would be.' And a little tear appeared in the corner of his eye and glistened in the sharp cold night.

'Why did I leave my home and start this journey?'

'Psst! Psst!' he heard in the night air. 'Over here in the corner. I'm here!'

With that the Christmas tree looked up and saw a movement in the corner of the market place. A tall, tall Christmas tree full of fairy lights was beckoning to him.

'At last you've seen me! What a beautiful red scarf you have. How I would love to keep warm on this cold night. All I have are these snowy white lights!'

The Christmas tree suddenly forgot he felt sad and moved his root feet towards the tall, tall Christmas tree.

'Here, please have the scarf. I was feeling sad as I've left my home and now I realise you must feel even sadder being so cold and alone.'

'Alone?' replied the tall, tall Christmas tree. 'Oh! No! I feel cold but not alone. The people from the market are looking after me so well. My root feet are nice and warm in this deep pot of soil and every day they give me water and food, so I have grown taller and taller. I can even glimpse over that hill where there is the largest field of Christmas trees that I have ever seen!'

'Really?' said the Christmas tree as his eyes opened with surprise and wonder.

'Oh yes – the largest field ever!' Repeated the tall, tall Christmas tree wrapping the beautiful red scarf even tighter around the pot in which her root feet were standing.

'If that's the case then my adventure is still a good one,' said the Christmas tree.

'Absolutely' said the tall, tall Christmas tree. 'Adventures are so important to experience right until the end.'



'Thank you for your kind words,' said the Christmas tree. 'I may have left my home on the hill side but I am still keeping it here in my heart.'

'Never lose the home in your heart!' echoed the tall, tall Christmas tree, with its' snowy white lights shedding lots of lovely bright beams just like gems and diamonds.

'Don't let me stop you on your way and thank you for your beautiful red scarf.'

'It was given to me and I'm so happy I could give it to you,' said the Christmas tree with a joyful voice. Even his root feet seemed to be walking at a faster pace now.

On he walked with such a spring in his step until the clouds gently folded away the dark blanket from the dawn sky. What a sky! And what a view!

The tall, tall Christmas tree had been right. He was in a field with the largest number of Christmas trees he had ever seen. It was a sight to behold.

He walked faster and faster and the ground beneath his feet was so lovely, soft and velvety that he felt his toes gently falling into the earth. And slowly they sank into the ground and stayed there.

The Christmas tree looked up at the beautiful blue sky and the singing of the blackbird echoed what he felt in his heart.

'I'm home! I'm home!' he cried out happily and glanced with excitement at the field full of Christmas trees.

His root feet felt warm and snug in the beautiful black earth around them. And the bright morning sun greeted him with the happiest of smiles. 'Good morning Prince of Trees!' The sun said making a beautiful royal curtsy by closing and opening her eyes so that the whole field was bathed in gold.

'Good morning!' answered the Christmas tree. I've had such an adventure and have found out I have two homes, one that I carry in my heart and the other here in this beautiful field.'

Welcome to you!' laughed the sun with shimmering beams in her hair. 'I am sure you will be happy here.'

And before she had finished this greeting a little red car appeared over the hillside. Its windows sparkled beautifully in the sun's rays. It travelled along the road and as it drove by the Christmas tree could hear the sound of children's voices. They were Lorcan and Amber! Their mother was taking them to the market.

'Look! Look!' exclaimed Amber. 'That Christmas tree looks just like the one that we had in our yard! It's so amazingly green.'

'Hello to you!' called Lorcan. 'Yes, you're right! It's our Prince of Trees!'

And the red of the car and the bright reflection of the sun seemed to bathe the tree in the brightest red ribbon of light.

'I hope our red scarf is keeping the Christmas tree warm and happy,' said Amber.

'So do I,' said Lorcan as the car sped on down the country road. And their voices became fainter as they travelled onward to the market and its square.

'What a perfect end to my adventure,' sighed the Christmas tree. 'My two friends will soon meet the tall, tall Christmas tree and I have so many new friends in this field. My root feet are now fully at home and the lovely rich earth and beautiful sunshine and showers will make sure that I grow taller and greener with each passing day.'

He glanced to the left and right and sighed happily. The field full of Christmas trees with their green majestic boughs gently waved their hellos to him.

'Welcome!' 'Welcome home,' they murmured.



We would like to thank Marta Salamoniwcz and Mary Dunhill for their gift of their time and talents in creating and illustrating a story that reminds us that wherever we are, home is in our hearts.

On 10th February 1940, Marta's father was deported to Siberia as a fifteen-year-old boy together with his family and thousands of other displaced Poles. The Christmas Tree story was written to remember all those children from those times to this very day in Syria, Iraq and so many other lands that continue to suffer the loss of their homeland.

Aid to the Church in Need



Distributing emergency food packages at a Sports Centre in Iraq © Aid to the Church in Need

About us

Aid to the Church in Need is a Catholic charity providing vital help to Christians who are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need in over 140 countries worldwide. Current priority areas include the Middle East, China, India, Pakistan, Africa and Central Asia.

ACN was founded on Christmas Day 1947 and today we have 20 national offices around the world. In 2011, in recognition of our work, Aid to the Church in Need became a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church.

What is the need?

In countries where religious freedom is not respected, the faithful can experience discrimination, social and legal injustices, forced conversion, physical abuse, imprisonment, torture and even death. In other countries where the Church is growing against all odds, the pastoral needs of the faithful are huge. Trusting in the compassion and generosity of our friends and benefactors, ACN supports over 5,000 projects around the world each year.

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