

# ACADEMY REPORTER

## THE PINE TREE AT ST. MARTIN

On Christmas Eve, the parish priest of the little village of St. Martin, in the French Pyrenees, was getting ready to celebrate Mass when he began to smell a delicious perfume. It was winter, the flowers had disappeared a long time ago – and yet there was this pleasant smell as if springtime had appeared out of season.

Intrigued, he went outside to look for the cause of such a marvel, and came across a boy sitting in front of the school door. By his side was a kind of golden Christmas tree.

“But what a beautiful tree!” said the vicar. “It seems to have touched the sky, for it gives off such a divine scent! And it’s made of pure gold! Where did you find it?”

The young man did not seem very happy at what the priest had said.

“It’s true that what I carry with me was growing heavier and heavier as I went along, and the leaves did get harder. But it can’t be gold, and I’m afraid of what my parents are going to say.”

The boy went on to tell his story: “This morning I left to go to the big city of Tarbes with the money that my mother gave me to buy a nice Christmas tree. But when I was going through a village I happened to see a lonely old woman who had no family to spend the great feast of Christianity with. I gave her some money for her supper, because I was sure that I could get a discount on the tree I was going to buy.

“When I reached Tarbes, I passed in front of the big prison and there was a bunch of people waiting outside to visit the inmates. They were all sad, for they would spend the night far from their beloved ones. I heard some of them commenting that they did not even have enough to buy a slice of Christmas cake. Right there and then, moved by the romanticism of people my age, I decided that I would share my money with those people, who needed it more than I did. I would keep just a very small amount for lunch; the florist is a friend of my family and he would surely give me the tree, and then I could work for him all next week to pay off my debt.

“However, on reaching the market I found out that the florist I knew had not come to work. I tried as hard as I could to find someone who would lend me money to buy the tree elsewhere, but it was all in vain.

“I convinced myself that I would be able to think better what to do if I had something to eat. When I approached a bar, a foreign-looking boy asked me if I could spare him some money, because he had not eaten in two days. Since I imagined that the child Jesus must once have been hungry, I handed him the little money that I had left, and returned home. On the way back I broke a branch off a pine tree; I tried to make it look nice by trimming it, but it just grew as hard as metal and it’s far from being the Christmas tree that my mother is expecting.”

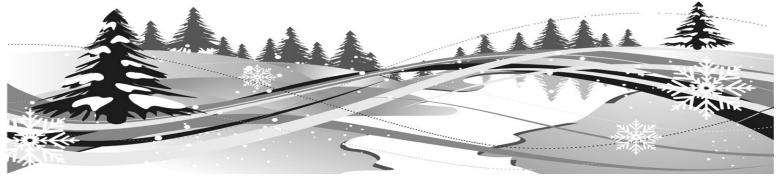
“My dear boy,” said the priest, “the perfume of this tree leaves no doubt whatever that it has been touched by Heaven.

When you broke the branch off the pine tree, it was bathed in the perfume of mercy. As you walked along, the angels touched the leaves and they turned to gold. Finally, when everything was ready, Jesus looked upon the work and blessed it.”

And so it was. The legend goes that the sacred pine tree is still there in St. Martin, but that its force is so great that all those help their brothers on Christmas Eve, however far they may be from the little village in the Pyrenees, are blessed by it.

**by Paulo Coelho**

<http://www.best-christmas-stories.com/2008/12/the-pine-tree-at-st-martin/>



## REMINDERS

December 10 & 11 - Christmas Program

December 18 - Christmas Party

December 18 - End of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter

December 18 - Christmas Break, 11:30 AM Dismissal

January 4 - Academy Classes Convene

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Thanks to Dad Hengeveld (See Luke 2:1-16)

12-21-2004

**I'M SORRY, THERE'S NO ROOM FOR YOU**

**I have seen and read the Friday Letter.**

**Parent Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please cut out, sign, and return this box to school.**