



The Three Gold Leaves

The St Mary's Vision Story

Once upon a time God created a beautiful town with a beautiful tree at the heart of it. But this wasn't just any tree. It was the 'Tree of Values'. Every green leaf on the tree was a value from God, and the townsfolk believed it helped them be better people.

Looking after the tree was a wise old gardener.

In the town lived a small girl called Mary. Mary loved her town as everyone was kind and happy because of the 'Tree of Values' and no one was ever sad.



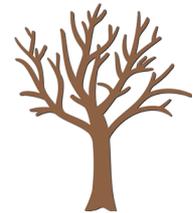
On the outskirts of the town lived a horrid old man with his pet rat. They hated everyone in the town because they didn't like people to be happy and kind.

So one night, they came up with a wicked plan. They crept into the town when everyone was sleeping and cut all the leaves off of the 'Tree of Values'.



When the people woke up the next morning, they were horrified at the bare tree at the heart of their town. No one knew where the leaves had gone.

But that wasn't the worst thing to happen. Something even more terrible happened. Everyone started to blame each other and be unkind to each other. They even started blaming the Gardener for not looking after the tree properly.



They all thought because all of the leaves had gone, they couldn't be nice anymore - so they all started being horrible to each other.

One person who didn't start being horrible and unkind was Mary. She didn't understand why people had become horrible and stopped following God's values

just because the leaves had disappeared. But she did think fixing the tree would make everything better.



She ran to the gardener and asked him what he was going to do to fix it?

The gardener explained that he couldn't fix the 'Tree of Values' as God had put it there. Mary was very upset.

But then the gardener told Mary that the leaves on the tree will only grow again if the people of the town work together and start showing God's love through their actions again. Mary didn't think this would work and that it was a silly idea.

"If you believe in me, I promise you, that together we can help the leaves grow back even stronger than before," he said to Mary.

But Mary didn't believe the gardener or his promise, it sounded too hard. So the gardener told Mary to sit in the garden around the 'Tree of Values' and think about it.

Faith

Mary sat on a log by the side of a path and cried. As she sobbed she saw something glistening on the rough path. She looked up. It was a mummy snail with her child. Why were the snails struggling to cross the rough path she thought? Then Mary saw the beautiful flowers on the other side.

The baby snail didn't want to cross the path and was scared. But the mummy snail said to have faith in her, as she knew what she was doing. She promised the baby the hard work would be worth it in the end for the lovely flowers.

Mary watched as slowly but surely, the snails struggled until they reached the beautiful flowers. The baby snail looked very happy.

Mary thought, "Maybe I should believe the Gardener's promise. I can be like the snail and then I can save the Tree of Values."



When Mary told the gardener that she believed his promise and had faith in the idea, he was very happy.

Just then, something amazing happened. A leaf started to grow on the tree. But not just any leaf. A Gold leaf.



Joy

The gardener told Mary that the only way for the leaves to grow back, was for everyone to show God's values again. Mary thought that she could just tell them to be nice to each other. But the people just laughed at her and walked away. No one believed Mary.

Mary was down heartened and went to tell the gardener that it wasn't working. So he told her to go and sit in the garden again to think. As Mary sat, she noticed two squirrels in another tree. A father squirrel was showing a younger squirrel how to collect fruit from the small branches without falling off.



Mary watched as the father went onto the small branch and hung carefully before collecting the fruit in his mouth and carrying it back. Then the younger squirrel tried. At first the young squirrel looked scared, but after trying and trying again, he managed to do it.

This gave Mary a great idea. Instead of just telling people what to do, she thought she should show them how to follow God's values, like the younger squirrel being shown how to collect fruit.

Just then Mary saw a lady walking down the road who had dropped her purse. Mary ran up and picked up the purse for her. The lady was overjoyed and she couldn't believe someone had been so kind. In fact the lady was so happy, when she saw a sad old man struggling with his shopping bags, she offered to help him. The old man was very grateful and joy spread across his face.

Mary couldn't wait to tell the gardener how the kindness she showed was spreading joy. The gardener was so happy that Mary had found a way to spread joy that he started to smile too.

Mary was so excited. She wanted to see how the new Gold leaf was growing, but when she looked up, she didn't see one. She saw two beautiful Gold leaves growing in the tree of values!

Peace

Mary and the gardener stood and watched as Faith and Joy slowly spread. But not everyone was getting the message. Mary couldn't see how she could get to everyone in the whole town. She went back to the garden to think.

As she sat in the garden thinking, a Dove sat on a branch above her head. It sang a beautiful song which rung out like a bell across the town. As it sung, another Dove

came and sat next to it and started singing the same beautiful melody. Then another and another, until a whole chorus of Doves sat in the tree and sung together.



This gave Mary a wonderful idea. Instead of trying to spread the message all by herself, she should ask all of the other people who now believed to come together and help her. So she asked the lady who had lost her purse, the old man with the shopping bags, and all the other people they had helped. They all sat and listened as Mary's message called out to them like the song of the Doves. They listened as Mary told them how she had found Faith and spread Joy. They remembered how they had found Faith and spread Joy too. She said if they all believed and work together, they could achieve spreading God's message.

So they all made a promise that they would spread the word of God to everyone in the town.

Slowly but surely, everyone in the town heard the call of Mary. They even started spreading the word of God too. Eventually, as everyone started to follow God's values again, Peace spread back across the town.

As Mary looked up with the gardener, she saw a third gold leaf appear on the tree. Mary was amazed. She asked the gardener why there were three leaves. He replied, "The first leaf grew because you had Faith in me. The second grew because you spread Joy to everyone. The third grew because together, the people worked together to bring Peace back."

"But why are they Gold?" asked Mary.



"They are Gold because of the promise you made to God. You showed Faith, spread Joy to others and brought everyone together to fill the town with Peace. With the Love of God at the root of all you did, you have made those leaves unbreakable."

Mary was delighted. After that day, people showed all of God's values again, and as they did, more and more green leaves grew around the three Gold leaves at the centre of the tree, until the 'Tree of Values' at the heart of the town, was bigger and fuller than ever before.