

REPAINTING THE ANGEL

The statuette of an angel holding the hand of a little boy had been placed on a neglected back shelf in an antique shop. It was covered with soot and dust, lost amidst the clutter of jars, dishes, and ornaments. A man browsing through the shop discovered the figurine and had an inspiration: He would rescue it from oblivion, restore it, and give it a place of honor among his Christmas decorations.

At home in his basement workshop, the man covered the angel and the child with glistening white paint. Then he painted the wings of the angel and the hair of the little boy with sparkling gold. Each brush stroke worked magic. The old, grime-covered statuette vanished, and a shining, new one appeared. The statuette was transformed before his eyes into a thing of radiant beauty.

As the man painted, he thought, Isn't this what happens to people at Christmas? They come to the end of the year dust-covered from the struggle. And then *Christmas inspires them to repaint their nature with love and joy and peace.*

The art of repainting the angel! This is our lifelong task: *to never stay down in the dust and the dirt, but, heroically, to rise again after each fall.*

Repainting the angel! We need never lose our ideals, dreams, and purposes. We can always make them gleam again with the glory of renewed hope.



This story reminds me how life takes on a special glow at Christmas. It starts with the wonder of a little baby who came carrying *a message of love, peace and hope.* For those in families, it continues with the happiness and camaraderie of celebrating together with loved ones. For all people, alone or with others, it is completed when we contemplate what Jesus has done for us and thank Him for the blessings He has given.

Christmas is special because we enjoy not only what God has done for the whole world, but also for us personally.

He has “repainted” us with new qualities that we couldn't have given ourselves. He has put His love inside us. He has given us peace, as the angels promised. He has forgiven all our

sins and failures, and now He accepts us as His children. He lets us feel the joy that knowing Him brings. We are transformed by Christmas.

May the peace, the joy, the love, the hope and the warmth of Christmas overflow in your heart and stay with you, not only during this Christmas season, but also during the whole year.