

## **A Christmas Story**

Once upon a Christmas – there was a family – a dad and mom and four young children who needed a place to stay.

A fire had forced them to leave their home and move in with family members.

They did not have a lot of money and all their Christmas gifts had been lost in the fire.

When news spread about the family's fire, Love and concern filled people's hearts. But, they didn't know what to do – or even how to get started.

So God sent an angel named Paula.

God chose the Angel Paula because there was something about her that was very special. She herself did not have a lot of money, but she did have a good and caring heart and great compassion.

She also had become part of a very caring Church Community who had accepted her with great love and offered her the opportunity to serve God in many ways – using her gifts of time and talent to make the parish run smoothly and to help many people.

Even though the Angel Paula did not know the family, she Paula made it her job to see that the family's four young children would have Christmas presents under their tree.

Because she was a person of faith, and was part of a caring Church, she knew that if her parish family knew about the family, they would want to help.

And so, one Sunday at Mass, she asked them.

And they did help.

Her parish family brought gifts and money for the family. They also brought food and even furniture.

But, Angel Paula knew that others too would also want to help. So she contacted the Red Cross and the local Radio station to help spread the news.

Hundreds of people (as far away as the North Pole) heard about what Angel Paula and the people of St. Mary's were doing and they wanted helped too.

Even the Bath Fire department, which had helped put out the fire that had destroyed the families house got involved.

And so, on the night before Christmas Eve, they brought Santa and a fire truck full of gifts to the place where the family was temporarily living.

But, there was a problem - a very good problem.

Because people had been so caring and generous, even the big fire truck decorated with colorful Christmas lights couldn't hold everything that people had donated to help the family.

So trucks and vans were loaded as well. They followed the Fire Truck to the place where the family was living.

TV Stations and Newspaper Reporters also followed. and that night on TV, the whole community watched as Santa shared gifts with the four children who he knew had been very, very good.

And Angel Paula, now wearing a set of antlers with flashing Christmas lights that she had borrowed from her parish priest, told thousands of people watching TV and reading the newspapers about how on a very cold winter's night Love had descended on a family that had lost everything – but gained hundreds of friends.

Later, after Santa headed back to the North Pole to prepare for his big trip around the world, He said a prayer of thanks . . . that he had again been blessed by God with another opportunity to bring joy to the world.

And Paula too, as she snuggled in her bed,  
prayed a prayer of thanksgiving,  
for God had chosen her to be his angel  
announcing to her Church and to all  
that Love had once again come into the world.  
Emmanuel! God is with us.

And God said to her, although hidden from her sight,  
Paula . . .Merry Christmas to you – and to all a good night.