

The cleverest son

written by Fr Bruno FERRERO | February 22, 2023

Long ago there was a man who had three sons whom he loved very much. He was not born rich, but through his wisdom and hard work he had managed to save a lot of money and buy a fertile farm.

When he became old, he began to think about how to divide what he owned among his sons. One day, when he was very old and ill, he decided on a test to see which of his sons was the most intelligent.

He then called his three sons to his bedside.

He gave each one five pennies and asked them to buy something to fill his room, which was empty and bare.

Each of the sons took the money and went out to fulfil their father's wish.

The oldest son thought it was an easy job. He went to the market and bought a bundle of straw, which was the first thing that came his way. The second son, on the other hand, pondered for a few minutes. After going round, the whole market and searching all the shops, he bought some beautiful feathers.

The youngest son considered the problem for a long time. "What is it that costs only five pennies and can fill a room?" he wondered. Only after many hours of thinking and rethinking did he find something that suited him, and his face lit up. He went to a small shop hidden in a side street and bought a candle and a match with his five pennies. On the way home he was happy and wondered what his brothers had bought.

The next day, the three sons gathered in their father's room. Each brought his gift, the object that was to fill a room. First the oldest son spread his straw on the floor, but unfortunately it only filled a small corner. The second son showed his feathers: they were very pretty, but they barely filled two corners.

The father was very disappointed with the efforts of his two older sons.

Then the youngest son stood in the middle of the room: all the others looked at him curiously, wondering: "What could he have bought?".

The boy lit the candle with the match and the light from that one flame spread across the room and filled it.

Everyone smiled.

The old father was delighted with his youngest son's gift. He gave him all his land and his money, because he understood that the boy was smart enough to make good use of it and would take wise care of his brothers.

With a smile you can light up the world today. And it costs nothing.