

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



Today's Readings:

They will shout for joy. Is 35:1-6,10
Don't complain about each other. James 5:7-10
Jesus, are you the one? Mt 11:2-11

Next Week:

Emmanuel: God-is-with-us
Is 7:10-14; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24

In a nutshell

God's nearness to humanity is recognised in the healing actions of Jesus. The blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk... Here is evidence Jesus offers in response to John's question: 'Are you the one who is to come?' Our Saviour comes, not as a worldly politician or military strategist; rather, as a humble preacher with a message of peace.



Prophets of hope

Listen to the powerful testimony of faith, hope and love that comes through this woman's words:

In 1964 our first son was born. Three more children followed, the youngest now 21. My husband and I were very much in love and very happy, although our gross income for the year was only one thousand pounds. Drought and bushfire made it almost impossible to pay off a mortgage, so I went back to teaching, driving 26 miles to and from home with two babies in the car.

We sold the farm (without much profit) and my husband took a job selling farm machinery and driving a baker's cart delivering bread. From there we went into our own business. Throughout it all there was a lot of love, prayers, hope and faith. And we always made time to listen to our children. My husband is a very gentle, giving person. Through no fault of our own we lost the business and our home. We were again back to square one: broke and homeless. Still, we

had each other. Our love became stronger and we held on to our faith.

Another business venture followed. Again we lost everything. Ill health, hospitalisation and suffering took over. Still, with love, faith and prayers we came through. Our family are all loving, beautiful people and we are all so close despite the crosses. My family is a patchwork of love!

Source: *In Their Own Words* (Bishops' Committee for Family and for Life, 2000)

Of gifts and giving

Every Christmas I ask my daughter to give away one of her favourite toys, one that is much-loved. At first there was a resistance to such a painful request. But now she looks forward to this gift-giving activity. I tell her that the true spirit of Christmas is in giving not because we are obliged or that we expect something in return. We give because we care and truly love.

On Christmas and on any day we can be a mighty giver. And not only in terms of material things. We can give of time, of personal ease, of comfort, of peace, of sympathy, of understanding, of forgiveness. (Dina)

Source: Edwina Mananquil-Delfino, *Colours of Life* (Melbourne: Filcom, 1999).



Still wrapping, still loving

Some years ago, Sonia Gidley-King began a ministry of providing wraps, rugs and blankets for people suffering the cold in impoverished and war-torn parts of the world. *Wrap with Love* is the name of this 'mission of mercy' which (at time of writing) has 20 to 30 thousand volunteers around Australia knitting, crocheting or quilting to stop human beings from freezing to death. As we approach another Christmas, Sonia and her extensive team are still wrapping, still loving. Spare a thought and a prayer for their work and for the plight of 'cold humanity'. [2001]

A 'Christmas Special'

What gift of love will you offer the world this Christmas? How about a donation of your time and skills to a worthy cause?



RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

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