

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



Today's Readings

Arise and shine! Is 60:1-6
The hidden mystery revealed Eph 3:2-3,5-6
Three 'star-struck' wise men. Mt 2:1-12

Next Week:

Baptism of the Lord
Is 42:1-4,6-7; Acts 10:34-38;
Mt 3:13-17

In a nutshell

The feast of the Epiphany celebrates the dawn of salvation in a world darkened by sin and death. In today's Gospel three wise men, rich in knowledge and earthly goods, search for and find treasure beyond all measure. Leading them on their journey is a great star. The light of the Christ-child shines for all peoples of the world.



Neighbours

A caring neighbour is a light in the darkness.

My Korean neighbours are quiet, gentle people. I mostly see them on Sundays when we are leaving for our respective churches. The parents are both studying, trying to find their niche in Australian society. It is obvious to me that they are struggling financially. At one time I was able to give them some spare furniture and they were so grateful.

The wife knocked on my door not so long ago. It was the first time they had actually asked for help. They had been without hot water for three days and the plumber, promising to call at 10.30 am, arrived early at 9.00 am while the wife was at the nearby bus stop putting her five year old son on the school bus. The plumber had left a card saying that she would have to pay an additional \$40 for the uneventful visit – a sum they did not have.

I promised to be with my neighbour the next time this

plumber called. But he cancelled this next appointment.

Then one day I noticed that the plumber was back and attending to the problem. I knocked on the door of my neighbours' flat to see if they needed support. There I found the husband, doing his best to communicate with the tradesman. The atmosphere was tense and his wife was coping by taking refuge in the bedroom.

It was sad to see this kind and gentle family so stressed by what should have been a straightforward matter. It also reminded me of the important role we can play in one another's lives as neighbours. Even a small gesture of concern and support can go a long way in building lifegiving neighbourhoods. (JS)

Action tip: Do I have a neighbour in need of my assistance?

Lighting the way

Even the simplest of everyday events—like a hello and a goodbye—are an opportunity to spread the light and love of Christ. Walking mid-morning in a suburban street a priest was pleasantly surprised to be greeted by a young man passing by. 'Good morning, Father,' said the young man, confidently and happily. 'Good morning,' the priest replied, shaking his hand. 'I'll pray for you.' Back came the reply unhesitatingly, 'And I'll pray for you too.'

Action tip: What can I say or do to share my faith in a simple greeting?



Lighting the way

Sept 2001. Upon celebrating his birthday, Jean Vanier (founder of L'Arche communities and the Faith & Light movement), said to his well-wishers:

'Some have asked how old I am now... 73! And I rejoice in getting older, a bit more vulnerable and thus called to be more open and trusting of God. I give thanks to Jesus for all he is doing in L'Arche and in Faith & Light which are called to bring a bit of light and love to our world. And I give thanks for each one of you. It is good to be bonded together in love.'

Think. Talk. Act.

- Name one 'light' in your life for which you are grateful.
- Think of one 'dark' area in your neighbourhood; a situation in need of love, compassion or justice. In what way are you helping to 'light the way'?



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

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