

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

A light amidst the gloom. Is 8:23-9:3
Look beyond your differences. 1 Cor 1:10-13,17
Jesus: a prophecy fulfilled. Mt 4:12-23

Next week:

The Beatitudes
Zeph 2:3; 3:12-13;
1 Cor 1:26-31; Mt 5:1-12

In a nutshell

As Jesus proclaims the nearness of God, he calls people to change their lives in a spirit of repentance. Going about their daily work, four fishermen experience a call to join Jesus in his mission. This means leaving their familiar way of life, 'taking the plunge' and not looking back. Only a profound conversion of heart could sustain such a risk.



Still a believer!

Somebody asked me the question, 'Why are you still a Catholic?' The word 'still' makes it a non-question for me. It's like asking me why I am 'still' a member of my family. Can one resign from being a family member? I could move to the farthest part of the earth, I could disown my family and declare my absolute autonomy; but that would not change the fact that I am a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a cousin. I could be an estranged family member, but the blood relationship would remain. In a sense this is how I see membership of my Catholic faith family, only the baptismal bond involves a mystery even deeper than blood.

Why am I still a Catholic? Are you suggesting that I would actually abandon my brothers and sisters and leave them to shoulder this mission alone? Disassociate myself from the power and depths of this tradition? Walk away from a community that offers me centuries of development of thought, the scriptures, the writings of the

saints, the witness of the martyrs, the courage and commitment of ordinary people, the richness of its symbols and rituals, the opportunities to grow and pray, to be healed and reconciled and fed by the very body of Christ...? Look, I am a descendent of the people of God who, from generation to generation, have treasured and handed on their faith, even to the point of shedding their blood. Why? So that people like me, would one day believe!

Admittedly, our faith inheritance is a story of struggle, loss and failure, but always the promise of hope and victory, all the way to eternal life. How could I walk away from this extraordinary love story between God and God's people? (TP)

Still following Christ

Fifty years ago, a school master teaching senior boys at a Catholic high school encouraged them to get involved in the St Vincent de Paul Society's outreach to the poor. A good number of boys responded to the challenge, becoming active junior members of the Society.

Today a certain number of these men, nudging 70 years of age and most of them retired, are still active in Vinnies. Regularly they make their way to Sydney's western suburbs, visiting people in need of material help or perhaps just some moral support, a good number of them migrants or refugees. (PK)

Action tip: Encourage a youth to get involved in an outreach to the poor. (Who knows where your suggestion will lead.)



Lifeline

A reader shares:

'Sweetest Jesus, I implore
Let me love you more and more.'
This prayer has been my companion almost all my 71 years. It has carried me through years of trial and sinfulness; of addiction to drink and gambling and that terrible Saturday morning when, in my demented state, suicide was a very real thought—the only solution available, or so I thought sixteen years ago.

How this prayer was planted in me I shall only know when I die, and I look forward to this revelation. (VJ)

Think . Talk

Share something of your journey as a follower of Christ:

- the highs, the lows;
- the celebrations, the struggles.

If someone asked you 'Why do you persist in following Jesus?' what would you say?



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

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